The mediation in late twentieth-century English theatres of selected ancient Greek tragedy texts and themes concerned with women and power

Thesis

Ruth Mary Hazel, B.A., M.A.

The Mediation in Late Twentieth-Century English Theatres of Selected Ancient Greek Tragedy Texts and Themes Concerned with Women and Power

Submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Classical Studies

OPEN UNIVERSITY

September 1998

EX12

RESEARCH DEGREES CENTRE

LIBRARY AUTHORISATION FORM

Please return this form to the The Research Degrees Centre with the two bound copies of your thesis to be deposited with the University Library.
All students should complete Part 1. Part 2 only applies to PhD students.

Student: RUTH HAZEL PI: M7190785X

Degree: DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Thesis title: THE MEDIATION IN LATE TWENTIETH-CENTURY ENGLISH THEATRES OF SELECTED ANCIENT GREEK TRAGEDY TEXTS + THEMES CONCERNED WITH WOMEN AND POWER [ABBREV.: "ANCIENT GREEK DRAMA IN MODERN ENGLISH THEATRES"]

Part 1 Open University Library Authorisation [to be completed by all students]

I confirm that I am willing for my thesis to be made available to readers by the Open University Library, and that it may be photocopied, subject to the discretion of the Librarian.

Signed: Ruth Hazel Date: 13/1/99.

Part 2 British Library Authorisation [to be completed by PhD students only]

If you want a copy of your PhD thesis to be available on loan to the British Library Thesis Service as and when it is requested, you must sign a British Library Doctoral Thesis Agreement Form. Please return it to the Research Degrees Centre with this form. The British Library will publicise the details of your thesis and may request a copy on loan from the University Library. Information on the presentation of the thesis is given in the Agreement Form.

Please note the British Library have requested that theses should be printed on one side only to enable them to produce a clear microfilm. The Open University Library sends the fully bound copy of theses to the British Library.

The University has agreed that your participation in the British Library Thesis Service should be voluntary. Please tick either (a) or (b) to indicate your intentions.

[a] ☑ I am willing for the Open University to loan the British Library a copy of my thesis. A signed Agreement Form is attached.

[b] ☐ I do not wish the Open University to loan the British Library a copy of my thesis.

Signed: Ruth Hazel Date: 13/1/99

ABSTRACT

This thesis posits a dialogue between ancient Greek and modern English theatres and gives evidence of this dialogue by relating different aspects of modern theatre to the recent performance reception in England of specific Greek texts or images which are concerned with women possessed of or by some extraordinary power.

Chapter 1 opens with an account of the aims and scope of the thesis, and discusses some of the problems of translating ancient Greek tragedies onto modern English stages. Each of the following chapters examines some aspect of late twentieth-century English theatre in relation to its reception through performance of a Greek original text or theme.

Chapter 2 deals with changes in English theatre over the last three decades, as reflected by versions of the *Bacchae*. Chapter 3 is about the role of the actress in performing Medea. Chapter 4 discusses how playwrights have translated for theatre some ancient Greek myths concerning women and sex. Chapter 5 considers the use of *Antigone* in the field of drama in education, and Chapter 6, the part women theatre practitioners have played in translating Greek drama into English theatres, with special reference to two productions of 'anti-war' plays: the Royal National Theatre's *Women of Troy* and the Royal Shakespeare Company's *The Phoenician Women*.

The final section of the last chapter reflects on the way the anxieties of male creators and consumers of Greek tragedies about women with power have been interpreted in English theatres, and the importance of the study of reception through performance for scholars working on the original texts.

CONTENTS

*

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I gratefully acknowledge:

The financial support of The Open University for the three years of my research studentship, and its assistance in funding my participation in relevant conferences and courses in Britain and abroad.

The encouragement, enthusiasm, and scholarly rigour of my supervisor, Dr. Lorna Hardwick, without whose confidence in my abilities I should never have dared to embark on this study. She has provided me with a model of academic excellence in procedure and enquiry, and any errors or solecisms in this thesis are solely due to my own insufficiencies.

Contributions verbal and written from Geoff Gillham, Wendy Greenhill, Katie Mitchell, David Stuttard, Tamsin Shasha.

In matters of response to productions I had not personally seen: Toby Hazel, Paula James, Adrian Poole, and many other friends and colleagues in and beyond the O.U.

The assistance of the staff of the Shakespeare Centre Library, Stratford-upon-Avon; of the Institute of Classical Studies Library, and of staff in Education sections of theatres throughout Britain. At the O.U. West Midlands Regional Centre, the help and patience of Carol Street.

Some of the material in the section on *Antigone* was first aired at a conference on ancient drama in 1997 at the University of Saskatchewan. I thank participants at this conference for their contributions and comments in reponse to the paper.

Advice and help from Alison Balaam, Chris Emlyn-Jones, Margaret Williamson, and, with regard to the Open University Reception of Greek Texts and Images Database, particular thanks to Carol Gillespie.

The continuing loving support, and meticulous proof-reading of my husband, to whom, in this, the thirty-first year of our marriage, I dedicate this study.

*

ABBREVIATIONS:

BICS	Bulletin of the Institute of Classical Studies
Dodds	*Bacchae*, E.R. Dodds, 2nd. ed., Oxford, 1960
JACT	Joint Association of Classical Teachers
JHS	*Journal of Hellenic Studies*
Kovacs	*Medea*, D. Kovacs, ed. & trs., Loeb, Harvard, 1994
M.R.E.	Manchester Royal Exchange Theatre
OUdb	The Open University Reception of Greek Texts and Images Project Database
Page	*Medea*, D.L. Page, intr. & comm., Oxford, 1938
P&P	*Plays and Players*
PI	*Plays International*
RNT	The Royal National Theatre
RSC	The Royal Shakespeare Company
Seaford	*Bacchae*, R. Seaford, trs. & comm., Warminster, 1996, rep. with corrections 1997
TLS	*The Times Literary Supplement*
TIE	Theatre in Education

NOTE 1: When a production is cited about which information is held on the OU database, the database abbreviation and reference number are given in square brackets after the first mention of this production.

NOTE 2: Since this thesis concerns English language productions of Greek plays, when a Greek original text is cited, extracts given are in English translation, and the chosen translation indicated in a note. On rare occasions when it seemed necessary to refer to the Greek words, I have transliterated.

*

CHAPTER 1

EISODOS

> ...every encounter with artworks of the past is really an exploration of current concerns and needs; and nowhere is this better illustrated than through a study of the performance histories of Greek tragedies. (Macintosh, 1997, 284)

My purpose in this study is to investigate how the multiform reinterpretation of Greek tragedies which has taken place in the late twentieth century has affected both theatre in England and, in some instances, subsequent readings of original texts. 'Translation' in the widest sense is my theme, both the translation of ancient texts for the settings, audiences and conventions of late twentieth-century English theatre, and the translation, or transformation, which a performance effects on that text.[1] Though simplistic publicity for modern productions of Greek drama in translation often invites wonder at how 'contemporary' the characters and situations of the plays seem to be, the most stimulating and memorable productions are those which preserve differences as well as showing similarities or resonances. Modern theatre is so various in its forms and functions that it may be thought to have little in common with Athenian theatre, but its very variety helps to prevent the possibility that any one reading implies a closure. Different companies or directors may choose to perform the same original play because it seems to have 'relevance' to their situation, but no one production will be definitive. Each production emanates from its own time, and reflects the translation by the operation of the mind-set of that time, of a play which successive ages may have recreated in their own images.[2]

The first section of this introductory chapter explains the parameters fixed for the study: concentration on recent productions in English theatres, on plays which have had at least one professional or public production, and on plays which deal with perceived female power. Developments in classics scholarship are related to (and sometimes parallel) developments in English professional theatre, including the impact of feminism in Britain. The problem of

finding a methodology which allows fruitful comparison of ancient text and modern performance is next addressed, and after that follows a section on 'translation' - in its various meanings. A survey of the different forms of modern English theatre introduces a substantial section on the problems of translating conventions and formal aspects of Greek tragedy for modern audiences. This chapter thus sets the parameters of the whole study and introduces some of the major issues relating to the mediation of ancient texts for modern audiences.

Establishing parameters

A slight feeling of embarrassment often accompanies the contemplation of English productions of Greek drama, either because of English unease with all that primitive foreign passion and breast-beating, or because the English audience at an English language performance of a Greek play is uncomfortably aware of the erudite and disapproving presence in the row behind of so many ghosts of nineteenth-century Classics dons. I specify 'English', not 'British'. This is not intended as a slight to Scottish, Welsh, Northern Irish or post-British-colonial theatres, and inevitably one will wish to discuss productions which cannot be confined to a rigid category of 'in English, in performance venues in England, by English companies'. The phrase 'English theatre' invites interrogation about notions of stereotyping and of cross-cultural influences, and indeed in the course of this study there will be occasion for just such interrogation. Though a notional 'mainstream professional English theatre' is proposed (in which, typically, companies based in England perform plays in English in English theatres), it will become apparent that the mediation of Greek drama in England is often carried out by, or with the influence of, theatre practitioners who are not professionals, are not English, and in some instances, did not design their productions for consumption in English theatres. The influence of such performances on the continuing mediation of Greek drama in England, especially with regard to my selected texts, will form part of my enquiry.

Because mainstream English theatre is a complex agglomerate, it may accommodate a variety of types of company, but it does not include theatre companies such as those in Scotland, Wales and

Northern Ireland which, though they might conceivably be included under an umbrella of 'British theatre', use theatre for nationalistic, political, social or ideological ends. Modern Irish playwrights who have been interested in translating Greek drama (Kennelly, for example, and in the north, Friel, Heaney, Mahon and Paulin) have, while avoiding Yeats's intellectualised and romantic angle, appropriated the legacy of Greece for the Irish people, often casting England in the role of the soulless, dispassionate, colonising Romans. This appropriation, both as a theory and in its realisation on stage, is already under survey by critics on both sides of the Atlantic.[3]

Neither Scottish nor Welsh theatre companies or playwrights have as yet used Greek texts in quite this way. The work of, for example, John McGrath and the 7:84 company has tended to focus on Scotland's comparatively recent history of exploitation by the English and English-speaking invaders (as in *The Cheviot, the Stag and the Black, Black Oil* (1973), a play arising from and aimed at the community). There is small number of Welsh language theatre companies (for example, Theatre Powys and Bara Caws) who strive to preserve identity through language.[4] In January 1998, the Cardiff-based company Dalier Sylw co-ordinated a Cymru heb Ffinian ('Wales without Borders') Arts Festival, in which a Welsh language production of *Electra* was performed - directed by a Croatian, designed by a Slovenian, using the projected text of an American play and the music of an Estonian mass.[5] In 1986, Moving Being produced a touring theatre version of the *Mabinogion*, thus asserting the existence of a Welsh oral narrative tradition to equal Arthurian romance, *Beowulf*, Homer, or the *Mahabharata* - all of which had at that date undergone recent translation into performance.

'English' theatre, however, cannot be so self-consciously nationalistic without slipping into Arthurian, Robin Hood, Elizabethan or Victorian theme-park territory, and it is precisely this kind of bland, fantasy world for which late twentieth-century playwrights and directors of worth have sought alternatives when trying to produce innovative work for theatre throughout Britain. As the dramatists of fifth-century Athens showed, myths carry the big issues which remain important to humankind, and to dramatise a myth allows a playwright to explore, through metaphoric representation, issues which would attract censorship or punishment if set in a

contemporary context.[6] It must be said that, to audiences in the fifties and sixties, the plays of the Athenian tragedians would have had a 'mythical' status - as the myths such playwrights used had, though in a very different way, for their original audiences. So, both the plays themselves and the stories which they dramatised offered the same degree of licence to those who, in the second half of this century, wished to translate them into a modern setting or reference scheme.

Unlike the theatres of some other countries, English theatre of the latter decades of this century has not been subject to official censorship. The Lord Chamberlain's office (which had been responsible for banning Sophocles' *Oedipus the King* from the professional English stage until the 1912 Reinhardt production of Gilbert Murray's translation) was abolished in 1968.[7] Nor has occupation, overt tyranny, civil division or unpopular war made it necessary for twentieth-century English theatre to use Greek myth to cloak subversive protest. It is true that *Women of Troy* and *Lysistrata* have made regular appearances in repertory, but though their production may have been driven by a sincere desire to protest against nuclear bases on British soil, or against the Falkland or Gulf Wars, English protest expressed through Greek drama has lacked the urgency of suppression, and sits oddly in comparison with, for example, Anouilh's 1944 *Antigone*, which related to the time of German occupation, Brecht's similarly anti-fascist version of 1948, Fugard's use of the *Antigone* of Sophocles in *The Island* (1974), Serban's *An Ancient Trilogy* [OUdb95] (1989-92), or Peter Sellars' 'Gulf War' *Persians* [OUdb208] (1993). English theatre's use of ancient Greek original sources has not been so deliberately political, but it is possible that, because it has not had to function primarily as a weapon of social change or protest, it has been able to be more diverse, more experimental in its translation of those sources than theatres whose first (subversive) loyalty was to a nation or ideology rather than to the bizarre, uncertain and often frivolous world of Dionysus. Some, however, might contest that it is a symptom of mainstream English theatre's bland and commercialised nature that it stages Greek plays which seem to be 'political' (in that they deal with issues about political situations) rather than being resolutely 'politicised' - that is, being prompted by contemporary situations to use the metaphors of Greek drama to make political comments or protest.

The list of selected texts for this study has to some extent drawn itself since, in order to use comparative analysis of recent productions (roughly, the last three decades), I have for the most part to deal with texts which have been given at least one professional production. Yet such has been the regeneration of interest in ancient Greek drama and such its influence on creative writing for the English theatre in the decades in question that it was necessary to impose further limits on the possible field of reference. The idea of concentrating on original texts or images which dealt with the perceived threat presented by women with some kind of power was suggested by developments in study of the classics and in theatre, in both of which areas the seventies saw the start of a move to discover, construct, or recover an 'other'. Whatever is 'other' serves to define what is 'us' or 'ours', and to show by contrast of negatives what is 'normal' or 'right'; but it became apparent to those working in the areas which had particularly to deal with what was other from Greek male citizen experience (women in antiquity, theatre and myth, foreigners) that otherness is not just a question of opposition; it both defines and qualifies the 'normal' and 'right'.

Developments in study of the classics

In his survey of modern critical approaches to Greek tragedy (in Easterling, 1997, 324-47), Goldhill, through a history of Sophoclean criticism, traces the opposition of philologists and 'modernists' from its start in the nineteenth-century Wilamowitz-Nietzsche row, and as he proceeds to deal with anthropology and structuralism, stagecraft and performance, and psychoanalytical approaches, it is apparent that these access routes have been particularly appropriate for study of Euripides. Goldhill titles the final section of this chapter 'The History and Politics of Reading', in order, as he says, 'to re-emphasise that in the preceding pages my critical approach to critical approaches has been all too self-consciously selective and polemical - partial in all senses' (346). Thus, without being overly self-congratulatory on behalf of classicists, he registers a major corner turned by modern scholarship: awareness of position (331). It is no longer acceptable to attempt to write about a play without acknowledging one's own position. This means that criticism or commentary has become a two-way process in that

the work under scrutiny challenges the modern reader's own cultural assumptions and critical methodology. How, for example, could one talk of Euripides' a) misogyny and b) proto-feminism without first declaring what one means by these terms and their implications for both modern and ancient readers? Signalling awareness of the modern mediator's position helps to preserve the otherness of the ancient Greek text.

Different kinds of 'otherness' which are to be met in the plays under consideration in this study received innovatively particular critical attention in the later decades of this century: women; non-Athenians; madness; theatre itself. The start of a move to recover women in antiquity was given impetus by two issues of *Arethusa* (1973), followed by Pomeroy's *Goddesses, Whores, Wives and Slaves* (1975).[8] Clark (1989) details later collections of papers by, for example, Helene Foley (1981) and Averil Cameron & Amelie Kuhrt (1983). In 1986, Marilyn B. Skinner and Phyllis Culham reviewed the progress made in ten years: not only had the area of study moved, as it were, from within the walls of the 'women's movement' into the playing space of respectable classics scholarship, but it had been joined by study of gendered history and anthropology.[9]

The 'Woman Problem' was seen to be that, as far as working from contemporary literary sources was concerned, the only way to access female experience in Greek societies up to the end of the Hellenistic period, with the exception of a miniscule number of female writers of poetry, was by way of *male* perception. What men thought women were, or should be, and how men thought women felt, spoke and behaved - perhaps in sharp contrast to how a male-regulated culture expected them to feel, speak or behave - could be inferred from the literature of male historians, law-makers and poet-playwrights, but the existence of the women themselves could only be assumed from biological necessity and the testimony (whether through literary, archaeological or visual texts) of men. In the early seventies, therefore, a time when feminist criticism was impacting on literary as well as social and history studies, there was a strong movement to discover, as much as might be possible, the voice and presence of women in antiquity. It was notable that the model for female excellence implicitly proposed by, for example, Thucydides in

his *History of the Peloponnesian War*, contrasted with the strong-minded and frequently outspoken women of Homer's account of myth, and still more with the wicked and outrageously 'other' mythic female characters whom the dramatists represented in dominating roles in tragedy throughout the fifth century.[10] If the wives and daughters of citizens of Athens at her height were indeed just so many well-ordered and well-tended 'fields for ploughing' (in the conventional marriage ritual phraseology) why were there representations in theatre of so many dangerous, exotic, monstrous or disordered women? Was it, perhaps, a way of containing and defusing a continuing male fear of females who have, or take, power - a fear which could only partly be alleviated by the soothing derision of comedy?

Another major movement in ancient history scholarship in the eighties challenged accepted concepts of 'Greek'; in 1987, Bernal's *Black Athena* sparked a lively debate (through a dedicated issue of *Arethusa* 1989, a further *Arethusa* article in 1992 by Edith Hall, and continued in *Black Athena Revisited* (1996), edited by Mary R. Lefkowitz and Guy MacLean Rogers) about the assumed origins of Greek civilisation, and Greek self-image. Bernal identified a European ethnocentric construction of the history of the Aryan origins of Greek civilisation, as distinct from the ancient Greeks' own mythical account of the colonisation of Hellas by Phoenician and Egyptian migrants. Even for those not directly concerned in discussion of the evidence for and against, and the ramifications or implications of his claims, the iconoclasm of Bernal's thesis was evident, and for those working with performance texts which used Greek myths or plays as sources, a whole range of possibilities in design and casting, not to mention the re-interpretation of character and motive, opened up.[11]

In two different areas loosely connected through theatre, the practice of defining by opposition (us/other, normal/abnormal) was being challenged: these areas were first, the Greek concept of mind and, second, the function of theatre. Twentieth-century psychology had long been brought to bear on fifth-century B.C. theatrical characters, but Sale (1972), and Padel (1992 and 1995) attempted to access the alien territory of the mind of ancient Greek characters by way of ancient Greek concepts of psychology. The interrelation of the 'other' of the feminine with the contained

and socially sanctioned 'other' of theatre was discussed by writers who either implicitly or explicitly recognised the resonances of such discussion for the post-feminist West (notably, Zeitlin, 1990 and 1996). In both these areas, it was evident that there was no clear-cut ancient Greek definition of 'right' or 'normal', and that the health and well-being of human beings as individuals and as communities rested on a more fluid base than the rigidity of oppositional definition would permit.

A final area of development needs recording, though it is not solely concerned with classics studies. From the early seventies, reception theory became a discipline which had effects not only on the study of existing texts (bringing together historicist and formalist approaches in Jauss's 'new paradigm'), but on the writing of new work.[12] Growing awareness of personal mental set in classics scholarship was in tune with a general self-consciousness, and this extended, in theatre, to include the encouragement of self-awareness in the audience. The plays of, for example, Peter Handke (*Offending the Audience*, 1966) show a link between German developments in reception theory and developments in the late sixties in European theatre.

The development of 'otherness' in English theatre

While such developments were taking place in the study of Greek drama, theatre in England experienced a similar flurry of creative revolutionary activity. Although the sixties and seventies may be viewed in retrospect as a Renaissance of English theatre in terms of playwriting, acting and directing, most of the shocks to the system experienced during this period by English audiences had been initiated somewhat earlier by Europeans - Ionesco, Pirandello, Brecht, Beckett, Genet, Artaud, Grotowski. Accordingly, English playwrights, in taking up the cues of such innovatory writers or practitioners, were reflecting and recognising the other in themselves and their society. In the decade following the Second World War, old social structures were being shaken and questioned, and an articulate, demanding young generation found a voice, although in a sense, controversial Angry Young Men playwrights like John Osborne and Arnold Wesker were building on traditional English theatre strengths of the well-made play, and post-

Ibsen realism of speech and character psychology. Both playwrights showed England its own face as they saw it, and spoke for the working class experience of post-war change. A society little known to the traditional audiences of West End or regional provincial theatres was revealed.

The sixties and seventies were to see many significant discoveries of otherness in theatre, both in subject matter and in form. Writers who initially seemed to follow the lead of the 'kitchen sink realists', active both in novel and play-writing, branched into more innovative work, influenced in the case of, for example, Harold Pinter (*The Room* (1957), *The Birthday Party* (1958) and *The Caretaker* (1960)), by European so-called 'Theatre of the Absurd' writers like Pirandello, Ionesco and Beckett, and in the case of John Arden (*Live Like Pigs* (1957) and *Serjeant Musgrave's Dance* (1959)), by Brechtian alienation theory. Both Absurd and Brechtian theatre sought to redefine the function and nature of theatre; it was not enough for a play to entertain by telling a story or presenting believable character representations, nor was it enough, even, to give a satiric or didactic - but more or less predictable - commentary on contemporary life. Certainly Brecht's approach with regard to subject was didactic, but in formal terms it was revolutionary, since he aimed to wrong-foot his audience; to keep them at a distance by reminding them always 'this is a play'. In Absurd Theatre, the conventional rules of plot and character were disrupted; in Pirandello's *Six Characters in Search of An Author* (1921), the idea of the death of the author was posited; in Beckett's *Waiting For Godot* (1953), the death of the plot (since in that play, as many contemporary critics were puzzled to find, 'nothing happens'). But, significantly, Rosenmeyer (in Finley (1981), 126), having pointed some analogies between Ionesco's *Rhinoceros* (1960) and the *Bacchae*, contends that: 'In spite of the substitution of the bourgeois milieu for the Dionysiac setting, a play like *Rhinoceros* seems to be closer in spirit to the ancient mystery drama than a more obvious imitation'. Consciousness of being participants in a ritual and uncertainty about what one might see or feel were evidence of ways in which new movements in drama recalled the ancient Greek nature of theatre.

'Violence and the sacred'

Two other areas of activity in theatre theory need mention, although they might seem to have little or nothing 'to do with Dionysos', and certainly no great affinity with Aristotle's *Poetics* which, since the Renaissance, has been the root text in England for all theorising about tragedy. These areas of theatre theory concern, first, Artaud's 'Theatre of Cruelty', and second, Grotowski's 'Poor Theatre'.

Violence

By the mid-century, English drama owed apparently very little to its Greek ancestory. Apart from some experimentation by Christopher Fry with plays in verse, and T.S.Eliot with verse drama based on Greek tragedy plots, there was little sign of the form of Athenian tragedy with its singing and dancing chorus, its mix of dialogue, lyric and recitative, its use of contrasted verse and rhythms. Nor was there scope on mid-century proscenium stages of the metropolitan or provincial theatres for the conventions of Athenian theatre: the three (male) actor rule, the twelve or fifteen-man chorus; masks, stylised costumes and movement. Even the function of theatre and the role of the audience were different, since plays were now for entertainment, not for the expression of civic pride and shared beliefs and values. Audiences could see a play almost any night of the year, and plays would have a run of performances, not be single, competitive events. There were about to be radical changes, since for some time, those concerned for the health of theatre in Europe had been seeking ways of rediscovering what they felt - in their different ways - to be its essential nature.

In France in the thirties, Antonin Artaud 's experiments in realising his theories about a Theatre of Cruelty brought performance close to ritual sadism; flaying the sensibilities of the audience in order to touch the raw nerves under the skin.[13] This was a world away from the view of tragedy held by those brought up on Aristotle's partly retrospective account; a view which was conventional until perhaps twenty years ago: that Greek theatre permitted no violence and few deaths to be represented on the stage, and that what was 'obscene' was, indeed, allowed only to happen decorously beyond the skene. Artaud, like Aristotle, was a theoretician of theatre, but

one who, in concentrating on the effects of spectacle was at variance with Aristotle in his ranking in importance of the elements of tragedy.[14] Artaud sought to turn theatre from being either text-orientated and cerebral, or a social occasion, to being an experience which would touch the audience's subconscious; breaking taboos about what might or might not be shown on stage was just one way of bringing a surreal, dream- or nightmarish-quality into theatre. (It is at this point, when theatre ceases to be ruled by the text, that a system of semiotic theory develops in order to describe what happens in performance; to indicate what is implied by spaces between words, and to define what spaces are being implied by words.) In bringing violence into the theatre, doing violence to the sensibilities of his audience, Artaud was indirectly suggesting a way for directors and performers to experiment with freeing some of the 'classics' of theatre from a textual straightjacket.

Poor but Holy Theatre

Working some twenty years after Artaud, Jerzy Grotowski established his Theatre Laboratory in 1959 in Opole, Poland. Grotowski, too, worked against an over-rationalised, convention-ridden theatre, insisting his actors work close to the emotions, not the words, of a piece, paring down what was necessary to the actor and his body - hence the description of his technique as aiming *Towards a Poor Theatre* (1969). Again, this experimentation has apparently little to do with the techniques of Athenian theatre in its heyday, as far as they can be inferred. With body and face concealed; actions and voice necessarily projected in order to reach all the audience; script regulated by poetic form; and plot itself dictated largely by received knowledge of myth, the Athenian actor was working in a concept of theatre to which, on the face of it, that of Grotowski or his most famous British exponent, Peter Brook, bore little resemblance. As will become apparent in later chapters, however, the importance to the study of ancient Greek drama of such innovations in Western theatre is that they allowed the ancient texts to be investigated and performed as plays, not as literary constructs, nor as archaeological artefacts. Grotowski's methods in particular influenced East European theatre practitioners to develop 'physical theatre' which used the full range of the actor's potential in mime, movement, voice work and non-cerebral response to subject matter.

In the chapter on 'The Holy Theatre' in his 1968 *credo*, *The Empty Space*, Peter Brook explained the need for the Absurd and for Artaud's and Grotowski's approaches, in order that theatre become a lively force, in which spectators were active, not passive, participants. He spoke of the phrase 'Theatre of Cruelty' as suggesting 'a groping towards a theatre, more violent, less rational, more extreme, less verbal, more dangerous' (1968, 61). What he described is very much 'other' than the West End theatre of the 1950/60s, 'other', too, than the theatre of fifth century B.C. Athens. Without wishing to try to recapture 'authenticity' with regard to any of the areas of world theatre he has worked in, all Brook's efforts have been aimed at translating into modern contexts the essentials of theatre such as he believes them to be.[15]

Away from realism.

A final point should be made about the subject material of English writing for theatre in the sixties and seventies. Perhaps in reaction to threatened over-use of 'slice-of-life' realism, playwrights looked to various sources for new plots or settings. Narrative representations of historical subjects have always been popular in theatre, and plays like Robert Bolt's *A Man For All Seasons* (1960) and Peter Shaffer's *The Royal Hunt of the Sun* (1964) were examples of such pieces. Both these plays used the Brechtian device of a choric commentator, and both, in ostensibly dealing with known history, allowed the writers to comment on the misuse of power and the conflict of personal and political loyalties - much as the Athenian tragedy writers used myth to deliver advice or comment.

In contrast, Peter Brook's 1964 production of *The Marat/Sade* of Peter Weiss (verse adaptation by Adrian Mitchell) provided a corrective to the use of narrative history as allegory and shocked audiences with more non-cerebral acting and physical theatre than had been usual in England. It also demonstrated, in the speech of de Sade in Scene 12 describing the execution of Damiens, the power of the spoken word alone to provoke feelings of horror - as the speeches of the Messengers recounting off-stage disasters might have done.

By the late sixties, writers began to rediscover myth as a vehicle for contemporary comment, and both Greek plays and the myths on which they were based became fair game for plunder, not only of subject material, but also of formal elements. Rather than use material relating to other places, times or to existing literary texts to produce a distance or non-realistic alienation, some playwrights chose to introduce into apparently real settings an awareness of the ritual recognised, either implicitly or explicitly, as necessary to modern society. Ann Jellicoe's *The Sport of My Mad Mother* (1958) perplexed the audience with a series of verbal and physical rituals of adolescence. Jellicoe wrote in a preface to the 1964 edition of the play that it had taken her some years to realise that it was based on myth, and used ritual: 'We create rituals when we want to strengthen, celebrate or define our common life or common values, or when we want to give ourselves confidence to undertake a common course of action' (1964, 5-6). David Rudkin's *Afore Night Come* (1962) had the apparently benign setting of a contemporary Evesham pear orchard, but culminated in the ritual murder and decapitation of the scapegoat interloper. (Dual themes of fertility and creative fecundity were to feature in later Rudkin plays in connection with extreme socially ritualised violence.) Peter Shaffer's *Equus* (1973) dealt with the idea of possession by gods, and the role of a doctor of the mind in exorcising the power of a particularly demanding god for the good of society. In this play, the narrative is achieved through scenes between two or three people, soliloquy to audience, and acting out (as in psychotherapy) of incidents from the patient's past. Throughout, there is a presence - though scarcely a Chorus - of Horses, and Shaffer's stage directions about the appearance of these figures are very precise, requiring that the audience see the actors, in their wire-frame horse heads and hoof pattens, as representing, not imitating, real animals. In this play, both subject and form acknowledge the need for socially recognised non-reality; 'otherness' from normal patterns of life.

A female 'other' in English theatre

Perhaps the most dramatic recognition, in society generally rather than in theatre, of an 'other in our midst' was forced by the impact in Britain - rather later than in America - of feminism. 1969

saw the publication in the States of Kate Millett's *Sexual Politics*, in Britain of Germaine Greer's *The Female Eunuch,* and the reissue in 1970, in the States, of Simone de Beauvoir's (1949) *The Second Sex*. The move from prose harangue to dramatic harangue was gradual, but the breaking down of previous barriers and expectations in theatre meant that a growing diversity of types of theatre - differing in venue, form, audience, performers - allowed, through performance, the voices of alternative or disempowered sections of society to be heard.[16] At the same time, therefore, that classics scholars of the seventies and eighties were engaging with the challenge of the 'other' to and in Greek society, English audiences were seeing the challenge of what had in 1969/70 perhaps appeared to be a lunatic fringe, and female writers, directors and actors were beginning to make inroads into the male-domination of theatre.

The active role taken by women in late twentieth-century theatre is just one of the paradoxes of modern reception of Greek texts, although writers like Caryl Churchill and Timberlake Wertenbaker, directors like Nancy Meckler, Phyllida Lloyd and Katie Mitchell, actresses like Yvonne Bryceland, Claire Benedict, and Juliet Stevenson, cannot be said to have been 'reclaiming' (in a feminist sense) the Greeks, since Greek theatre never was, and never was intended to be, in the hands of women. But the voice of the other that was female was expressed in Greek drama, and for purposes necessary to a male-dominated culture. If female choruses express normal, sane reactions, female leading roles tend to be the extraordinary, the atypical, the abnormal, yet their very otherness, not just from male Athenian citizens, but from other women, is what rendered them necessary as exempla to the society which observed them. The contained threat (and glamour) of female characters possessed of or possessed by some particular power clearly made good theatre for the fifth-century Athenians, but also proved to have resonances for men and women of the late twentieth century, since the challenges such women posed to society and to the individual were explored through the reception in performance of their mythical histories.

Finding a methodology

The intention in this study is to make a bridge between ancient Greek and modern English theatre, investigating what the translation of selected texts or narratives into modern theatre suggests about their reception and their resonances for late twentieth-century audiences. The importance to this area of research of the work of writers on pre-twentieth-century classical influences on English literature is fully recognised, as is the importance of a resource of commentaries on pre- and early-twentieth-century productions both British and world-wide; such work forms the basis for comment on more recent theatre activity and will be referred to both explicitly and implicitly during the course of this study. It is not intended that the study be narrowly concerned either with feminist reading of Greek texts or with theatre history ancient and modern, or yet solely with matters of textual analysis and literary criticism. All these disciplines or methodologies will have their place. In order to be able to comment on the translation which has occurred in the production/s of a play, it is clearly necessary to attempt to understand that play's original context; to be aware of cruxes or problems which arise when we try even to read the play in the study. Equally, when considering the modern production, it is important to know why this play, this story of an ancient world, was deemed to be of interest to the consumers, and how the modern *choregoi* elected to read the play in performance. Case studies of productions provide a major source of evidence about the mediation in English theatres of Greek original sources, so, in addition to using the tools of literary criticism - which include study of social context - it will be necessary to have the outlook of the theatre practitioner as well as the reviewer in order to reconstruct and read modern performances.[17] To sum up: my approach in this study utilises a pluralist methodology.[18]

It is not enough, however, to set side by side reconstructed readings of two perhaps very different plays; such a display might well invite the response 'So what?'. The two texts so placed may well be side by side, but they are not speaking to each other. The increasing involvement of eminent classicists in the 'other' world of theatre (and indeed, the interest taken by professional playwrights and poets, like Harrison, Logue, Churchill or Wertenbaker, in classical texts) means that there begins indeed to be a dialogue between ancient and modern theatre, between old and new readings of myth. It is not simply that new translations, imaginative productions or modern

versions help to mediate the classics to a modern audience; this would be an appallingly patronising approach - as if poor old Aeschylus, Sophocles and Euripides need sparking up to make them as palatable as (oh dear) they have to be made in order that this generation should get all the Culture it needs. Rather, in finding a reading of an original play which is particularly resonant or appropriate for the modern audience, the director can send the student of the classics back to the text, perhaps in indignation and annoyance, but with a renewed or a new interest. It is not a question of 'Did Sophocles read Freud before he wrote *Oedipus Tyrannos*?', but 'how might Steven Berkoff's post-Freudian interpretation of *Oedipus, Greek* [OUdb93] inform our reading of Sophocles' original - and vice versa?' Such dialogue, in addition to revealing what we might call a dramatic structuralism,[19] sheds, by the process of analysis through comparison, interesting light on the debt modern English owes to ancient Greek theatre.

Some of the methodological hot potatoes which such an approach throws into the hands of the researcher or critic have been described by Taplin in the first chapter of *Greek Tragedy in Action* (1978). His preface to the revised edition of 1985 signals one problem in his vigorous disclaimer of being 'a ringleader of those who maintain that we should concentrate on performance *rather than* words' (ix). While happy to feel that in this and in previous books he has contributed to performance-related study of classical texts, and helped classicists to take advantage of the work of writers in the fields of performance studies, theatre semiotics and non-verbal communication, he asserts the primacy of the text and its sufficiency for directing a theatrically effective performance.

Two problems arise from this emphasis on the primacy of the original text: the first concerns the 'translation' of an original for modern theatre; the second, how to deal with the necessarily subjective corpus of secondary sources which accrete round a performance. For those whose prime concern is the Greek originals in their context, or reception of the same, there may seem to be objections to putting up versions of those originals - bastard or hybrid texts or performance readings - for consideration in the same show-ring as their pure blooded sources. I shall return to Taplin's thoughts on versions and on the whole question of 'translation' later.

On the use of secondary sources (reviews, publicity materials, personal recollections by participants), J. Michael Walton instances a graduate student of his, writing about the 1938 Komisarjevsky *Comedy of Errors,* magnifying the perception of one critic, such that a clock of normal proportions grew to become 'a huge townhall clock which dominated the set'.[20] Walton, having thus pointed the difficulty of ascertaining a true picture of a performance through individuals' recall of a 'stage moment', concludes: 'The absence of the eyewitness account in any consideration of the first performances of Greek plays may, consequently, be a partial blessing'. Hartigan (1995, 4) is not so dismissive of subjective recall of stage 'moments', but declares an interest on behalf of her sources: her [performance] 'histories are based on the comments of contemporary drama reviewers and critics, and thus naturally reflect the sentiments and the biases of those who make a living by judging theatrical productions'. Clearly, in using secondary accounts to deduce reception of a text - whether an original or a version - it is imperative that the researcher collate different accounts, and keeps in mind the 'sentiments and biases' of the reviewers, writers or speakers, including, as Goldhill would agree, her/his own.

Another major problem recognised by Taplin (1978, rep. 1993, 5) is the attempt by reader-critic or reader-director to arrive at an estimate of the author's intention:

> I have spoken of the dramatist's meaning, of what he is trying to convey, in full awareness that the concept of 'the author's intention' is a battleground of literary critical theory.

Even allowing for the honest intention on the part of the interpreter of a play to deliver the author's message as he intended it, how is s/he to arrive at 'what was intended' through the fog of socio-cultural change overlying the quicksands of translation? As Taplin points out, reception involves two elements, the originator and the receiver, and if we as receivers try to ignore our part in the process, acting like 'naive historicists' (177) who want nothing more than to take a mental time machine into our writer's age, we are not so much receiving the text into our own lives as visiting it.

The modern director may have any number of reasons for wanting to direct a Greek play in English, and trying to estimate author's intention may come low down on a list of priorities. At

one end of the scale there may be a director with a background in classics, passionate about the mediation of ancient theatre texts to modern audiences, alive to the implications of contextual evidence about a text and sensitive to the problems of intentionality and of translating form as well as language. At the other end may be a director who has been allocated the biennial serving of a Greek classic in provincial Rep., and is trying to find ways to make the plot and characters of the chosen play attractive to a known audience. Both will come up with answers and a production appropriate to their theatres, but the second example may take liberties with the play which seem, quite simply, like a prostitution of the text, having an attitude to the author's intentions similar to that of Rhett Butler to the problems of Scarlet O'Hara: 'Frankly, my dear, I don't give a damn'.

A concomitant problem is that:

> Faced with the suggestion of some new point in a work of literature, particularly if it is a point of some subtlety, sceptics - particularly classical scholars - are inclined to riposte "I don't believe any such thing crossed the author's mind."
>
> (Taplin, 1978, rep. 1993, 6)

Teachers of literature generally would not be so particular; the protest 'but that's reading things into the text!' is one commonly heard from students who feel indignant, as if some propriety had been outraged, by connections made, resonances found, between the sacred text and the profanity of modern life. Perhaps because the English education system has, in the study of literature, so hallowed the idea of the canon and the sanctity of the text with regard to Shakespeare, English mainstream theatre until the latter part of this century has tended to concentrate on the text, the whole text and nothing but the text.[21] It could be argued that it is in part what may be seen as outrages against propriety of the texts of the classics which have helped to revivify that theatre.

Translating the play

It should be acknowledged that in speaking of the 'translation' into performance on modern English stages of ancient Greek plays or narratives, at least three senses of the word are in play:

first, the translation of one language to another; second, the translation of the story from one cultural world into another; and thirdly, the translation of the play or narrative in terms of form. (Sometimes such a formal translation can be simply from Athenian tragedy to a tragedic form acceptable to the late twentieth century; sometimes it may involve translation from one genre to another - epic or narrative poetry to play, for example.) Inevitably, the three areas of translation will at times overlap.

As all who have attempted anything more than the most 'vehicular' translation[22] know, the business of trying to convey not just substance but also form, associations and nuances of a literary work in a foreign language is both fascinating and infuriating. The delight of trying to find appropriate ways of translating the original combines the pleasures of crossword and jigsaw. Unfortunately, the process is not the end product, and in arriving at an end product - the translated text - choices must be made which restrict, qualify, and inevitably limit. John McFarlane (1953), having shown the inflexibility of literal translation, and the part the assumed audience must play when referential or emotive language is being translated, reminds the reader that just as one cannot talk of the meaning of a poem, for example (or a speech in a Greek tragedy), so one cannot really talk of the translation of the meaning. Steiner (1975, rep. 1998, 251), giving an account of the history of translation theory, suggests an almost superstitious attitude to the act of translation in pre-print, pre-Reformation Europe:

> The perennial question whether translation is, in fact, possible is rooted in ancient religious and psychological doubts on whether there ought to be any passage from one tongue to another. So far as speech is divine and numinous, so far as it encloses revelation, active transmission either into the vulgate or across the barrier of languages is dubious and frankly evil.

Even after the end of the fifteenth century, he continues, secularised society denied the feasibility of 'true symmetry between two different semantic systems', but that would not deter translators from attempting to find the theoretical as well the practical solutions.

Steiner asserts that the tripartite division postulated by Dryden of types of translation of literary texts into metaphrase, imitation and paraphrase was implicit in, for example, Roman literary

criticism: 'All the terms in Dryden's exposition were current long before he used them' (Steiner, 1975, rep. 1998, 267), and indeed, identification of translation routes does seem to fall into threes: the two extremes and a notional golden mean: word-for-word literalism; version, and 'paraphrase' (Dryden) or 'metapoem' (Holmes, 1988).[23] In writing of the translation of verse (1988, 23-33), James Holmes actually devises four descriptions of approaches to translation, which to some extent equate to the tripartite division. 'Mimetic' translation tends to emphasise by its strangeness, 'the strangeness which for the target-language reader is inherent in the semantic message of the original' (27). In other words, it stresses the alien quality of the original much as word-for-word translation would. The 'analogical' translation naturalises the poem into a native tradition: 'this form is to be expected in a period that ... [believes] its own norms provide a valid touchstone by which to test the literature of other places and times', as, for example, the neo-classical periods in England and France (cf. Steiner's quotation of Racine: 'good sense and reason are the same in all centuries. The taste of Paris has shown itself concordant with that of Athens' (Steiner, 1975, rep. 1998, 452)). 'Extraneous' translation, Holmes suggests, does not derive its form from the original at all, and allows the metapoet freedom to transfer the 'meaning' of the poem, whereas the 'organic' mode, Holmes identifies as 'fundamentally pessimistic regarding the possiblities of cross-cultural transference as the mimetic is fundamentally optimistic', and hence, has 'naturally come to the fore in the twentieth century'. It allows a new intrinsic form to develop from the 'inward workings of the text itself' (28). Holmes cites as an example Christopher Logue's reworking of two books of the *Iliad*, and Ezra Pound's versions of sections of the *Odyssey*. Extraneous and organic translation may both be seen as forms of version, or imitation.

As another whole body of critical commentary shows, however, translating a performance text involves different problems from translating a poem, even when that performance text is in verse forms in its original.[24] It is arguable that in trying to find a rendition into English for performance of a Greek tragedy, directors do have slightly more idea of the likely shared assumptions and experience of the intended audience than, say, the publisher of an anthology of foreign poetry would have. At the most basic, the director working for a regional repertory

theatre knows a different type of translation can be used from what would be acceptable in a university classics department student production. But there can be miscalculations; some drama critics who reviewed the 1986 Lyric, Hammersmith production of *Medea* [OUdb178] commented on the insufficiencies of the Philip Vellacott translation - insufficiencies which became apparent in the audience's reactions to what came over as bathetic moments. Yet that translation, in the study, is an acceptable middle road between literal and baroque.

Increasingly, theatre companies or directors are seeking translations of the text which are appropriate to their intended audience, and this often means a strengthening of the ties between academics, creative writers and theatre practitioners. An early high point of this kind of collaboration in Britain was the association of Tony Harrison and Oliver Taplin with the National Theatre in 1980/1 which resulted in Harrison's mould-breaking version of the *Oresteia* [OUdb207]. David Rudkin and Ranjit Bolt are also Classics graduates who have used original Greek texts to produce different types of translation. Timberlake Wertenbaker has had the advice and help of Margaret Williamson; Caryl Churchill, of David Lan. Less high-profile is the soundly academically backed Actors of Dionysus company for whom its classics-graduate director, David Stuttard, translates, and in the amateur field, Chloë Productions (based at the Institue of Classical Studies) has Russell Shone as translator and director. Adrian Mitchell, Christopher Logue and Alistair Elliot are among the poets who have collaborated with academics or theatre practitioners to produce translations for specific performance situations, though what resulted might be termed a version rather than a translation from the original - as, for example, Logue's narratives for performance by himself and Alan Howard, *Husbands* [OUdb147] and *Kings* [OUdb148].[25] That directors and companies do feel a need for specialised readings of Greek originals for targeted audiences suggests that they wish to perform them, not out of duty or as curiosities, but because they are good theatre. Consideration of the kind of translation of text required for specific theatre conditions leads on to the question of how a play's substance (plot, characters, messages) may or should be translated into modern theatre.

Taplin makes distinction (1978, rep. 1993, 172-81) between three approaches to staging Greek tragedy in modern theatre: the attempted 'authentic', the 'version' ('after' rather than 'by' Aeschylus), and the middle road translation. The analogy he uses is Dryden's description of textual translations: 'metaphrase, imitation and paraphrase' (179). It is easy to see how both the metaphrase (literal or authentic) and the imitation (version) of performance of Greek tragedy might, in the words of P.G. Wodehouse's Jeeves, be 'fraught with imponderables'. It is impossible to reproduce all the conditions of a fifth-century B.C. performance since, in spite of the vast resource of researches made both through archaeological and textual study, some information still eludes us: what was the nature of the music played by the aulete? was there or wasn't there a stage platform in front of the *skene*? what would the choreography of the chorus be like? On such matters, even Pickard-Cambridge himself is reserved (on chorus activity: 'At moments of crisis they doubtless reacted as the crisis demanded' (1988, 244)), and he silences any tendency in his reader to give way to unsupported hypothesis or conjecture with the warning that: 'modern literature on the subject of methods of delivery in Greek drama is as immense as the evidence is slight and inconclusive' (246). But the temptation for students of the classics to try to reconstruct an authentic production is great, since it would be fascinating to know how the use of doubling with two or three male actors in masks and Pronomos-vase-style costumes,[26] with the support of a chorus of twelve or fifteen young men singing and dancing, accompanied perhaps, in the absence of an authentic aulete, by an oboeist, would actually work in an open-air, in-the-round theatre. The greatest imponderable with which such a production would be burdened would not be any question of presentation, design, technique or linguistic translation, but the audience, for even an audience of classics students, aware of the conventions and implications of this type of performance, is conscious of being present at an experiment, as it were; voyeurs from the inside of the time machine, not spectators in the showing-place. Attempts at historical realism seen at any time remove appear quaint and dated, showing themselves to be children of their own time, not of the time of the original, so bearing out the assertion that such attempts at reconstruction reflect more those who reconstruct than that which is reconstructed.[27]

At the other extreme, the imitation of an original (in Dryden's and Taplin's usage) is 'about' or inspired by the work and has no pretensions to being the work itself. Where the author or playwright is honest about his or her creation around the work of another writer, the critic feels less anxiety (or outrage) about the result.[28] As Taplin puts it: 'At least the new play's relation to the original is brought out into the open: it does not pretend to *be* Aeschylus or Marlowe. And the adaptation invites fruitful comparison with its source' (1978, rep. 1993, 173). Further, the imitation, or version, may result in a play which, in its own age and of its own type, bears not unworthy comparison with its originator: Brecht's *The Resistible Rise of Arturo Ui* (utilising Shakespeare's *Richard III* and *Macbeth*), Edward Bond's *Lear,* and Derek Walcott's *The Odyssey: A Stage Version* [OUdb845] are possible examples.

However, a version can, even in the hands of a talented playwright, fall into the trap of being too specific to its period, too topical, so that it dates quickly; an example might be David Bowen's *The Disorderly Women* [OUdb120] (1969) which sets the story of Pentheus, Dionysus and Agave as a comment on the threat of an emerging drug culture. Again, a version may, though transplanted to a new cultural context, retain too much of its original to convince; or, in trying to translate formal aspects, result in a muddle of performance styles or genres. In the former case, as happens in Soyinka's *The Bacchae of Euripides: A Communion Rite* [OUdb118], some characters ring false compared to others, and, in the latter - here, Churchill's *A Mouthful of Birds* [OUdb116] is an example - dance, mime or choric verse sit uneasily with naturalistic dialogue. Where the text of a play for the theatre is translated into opera or film, the change of genre should, one would feel, be enough to signal that this is in effect a new work, but in cinema particularly there can be uncertainty about the rules of critical appraisal: is Branagh's film of *Henry V* to be judged as a performance of the play on film, or as *homage à* Olivier's 1944 version? Should we view Pasolini's *Medea* [OUdb182] as a version of Euripides' play, or as another of Pasolini's essays on the Outsider, which this time draws its material from a mélange of myths about Jason and Medea?[29] At the very periphery of the category of 'version' lie works which may appear to have only tenuous connection with acknowledged Greek originals and works which, though they have no avowed source, seem to the critic to show strong influences or

echoes of a particular work. An example of the first might be Pasolini's *Teorem*, which both film studies and classics scholars (MacKinnon and Oranje, for example) would class as being 'after the *Bacchae*', and of the second, Pinter's *The Homecoming*, in which the arrival of a strikingly 'other' outsider in an all-male community challenges and tears apart the existing order, establishing a new and ambiguous one very much as Dionysus does in the *Bacchae*.

Between these two extremes should lie the golden mean of translation of the original play - the equivalent of Dryden's 'paraphrase' of a text, Taplin suggests (179-80). But this too often proves a perfection difficult to realise since, just as there is not a definitive meaning or a definitive translation of the text, so there is no such thing as the definitive theatre performance. The linguistic and cross-cultural slippages which translation of playtext is heir to are compounded by the slippages of communication and reception inherent in such an interactive and ephemeral medium as live theatre. Though one may speak of 'good' and 'bad' productions, one does so knowing that this is a personal judgement, however informed by knowledge of the text and of theatre technique, and that one should never have the temerity to assert that a production as a whole is 'right' or wrong'. There are, however, ways for a director to try to approach the production of an Aeschylus, a Sophocles or a Euripides play so as to present the audience with the author's message, *as far as the director can interpret it*, in a form which approximates for this age to the effect its form might have had on its original audience - again, *as far as the director can ascertain it.* Thus the director can present the play, hand on heart as Aeschylus's, Sophocles' or Euripides', but still allow the translated text, design and staging to reveal what resonances that play seems to its *miseur-en-scène* to have for modern audiences. Colin Teevan gives a caveat about trying to force relevancies from or on to ancient texts:

> There is a tendency in most contemporary translations and productions of Greek tragedies to adapt them to suit contemporary situations or issues ... of course, there is no rule that says one cannot do this, but we should be aware that this serves to reduce the breadth of the originals... [The imaging of Troy as an embattled Northern Irish town, for example,] hinders the suspension of disbelief necessary for the viewing of these dramas. Greek tragedy is consciously metaphorical rather than literal.[30]

The director of the paraphrase production would seek to find ways of releasing the metaphor for modern understanding and appreciation, and to avoid getting trammelled in the literalism, either of authenticism or of modern 'relevance'. During the course of this study, however, it will be appropriate, on occasion, to consider the contributions which experiments in 'authentic' productions and versions or imitations have made to the whole process of mediating Greek originals to a modern audience in England, and it will become apparent that the judgement on the success of a translation into modern theatre cannot simply be a question of academic legitimacy. A play which is a travesty of its source and offends those who know and value the original may yet provide a dynamic, memorable, moving theatrical experience for the audience for which it is designed, and this fact raises a number of questions: what is now the function of theatre? Should text serve theatre, or theatre text? Do dead poets have rights? Of these questions, only the first is capable of a tolerably definitive answer, but the other two inevitably underlie judgmental verdicts on modern mediation of ancient texts.

Modern theatre conditions

Compared to the function of Athenian theatre of the fifth century, modern theatre seems a sprawling, or Protean, beast. The theatre for which the great Athenian dramatists wrote had religious and civic functions; it reasserted Greek civilised and moral values, but asserted also Athenian (particularly) greatness of spirit in that it permitted and channelled self-questioning. Simon Goldhill (1990, 114) makes the point that those tragedies performed which 'implicate the dominant ideology put forward in the pre-play ceremonies in a far from straightforward manner, indeed ... seem to question, examine and often subvert the language of the city's order', are in fact not subversive of the concept of the *polis* as home and protector of civilisation, and show Athens in a positive light in contrast with the tragic cities of myth; Troy, Thebes, Mycenae. Within its conventions, the dramatic contest exercised, as it were on a rein, a necessary wildness. Compared to what can be established from the *Fasti* and *Didaskaliai* about the Athenian Dionysia and Lenaia, information about the rural Dionysia, about the repetition of successful plays in provincial theatres, about the growth of a professional body of theatre people - actors,

writers, trainers, musicians, stage managers, costume and mask-makers, stage crew - is sparsely supported by evidence.[31] However, it would seem that theatre retained a serious function as a religio-political expression of community throughout the period of Athens' rise and decline, and that this function was true for theatres in lesser as well as great civic centres.

Modern mainstream English theatre retains the role of upholder of a cultural establishment: that there are now two national theatre companies which boast the addition 'Royal' (the RSC and the RNT) demonstrates this. It might be argued that the part that these and West End prestige theatres play in catering for tourist and corporate interests echoes, too, Athens' welcoming of foreign visitors and dignitaries to the Dionysia, and the block bookings for guilds or specified groups of theatre seats. Currently, mainstream English theatre is internally divided as to whether this role is one it wishes to be seen to be upholding.[32]

Since the Reformation in England, a gradual process of secularisation has removed from theatre its role in religious ritual. Elizabethan and Victorian theatre may have upheld a moral orthodoxy, but church and theatre had effectively parted company. Nonetheless, mainstream theatre continues to provide a forum for airing moral or social issues. Moreover, a wide variety of theatre venues and spaces has appeared in the second half of the century - thrust and apron stages, theatre-in-the-round, studio theatre, open air theatre, pub theatre, street theatre - with each space presenting its own challenges and each venue its own demands in terms of audience expectations and performance feasibility. For Athenian audiences, and for those who attended the medieval Mystery plays, feelings of civic or religious duty mixed with enjoyment or celebration, but modern potential audiences feel no such obligations and can choose a form of entertainment which does not involve even the reduced level of audience participation which live theatre now does.

For some areas of theatre, however, the function of education or moral didacticism remains; Theatre-In-Education and other types of Youth Theatre seek to educate through participation in theatre, with students or children either watching, or watching and being involved in the

presentation of dramatic narrative or situations. Alternative, fringe and protest theatres permit criticism of established institutions or orthodoxies in a manner that takes theatre to the limits of conventions and beyond (both in form and in what is being said), yet, because they remain recognisably a pretence, an acting out rather than 'doing', they are a contained, if radical and dangerous, 'other' within society. The aim of such theatres may be didactic or more open-ended; sometimes the aim is achieved if the performance (which may, like much Athenian tragedy, be a one-off) shocks the audience from its expectations and sets it feeling or thinking in a new way.[33] This theatre experience is a long way from that of the corporate guest in a Super-seat at Stratford, or of the audiences at Cliff Richard's *Heathcliff* at the National Indoor Arena, Birmingham, or, again, of a participant in the N.U.S. Drama Festival - but these are only some of the many faces of late twentieth-century theatre in Britain.

Problems with conventions

Though modern English theatre conditions and functions are so different from those for which Aeschylus, Sophocles, Euripides and Aristophanes were writing, the possibilities for using their plays as performance texts for a variety of types of audience are surprisingly many. But modern audiences have different expectations about Greek drama from those of the original audiences, who knew the story and understood the formal conventions governing the plays on offer at any dramatic competition; they were waiting, not so much to be passively entertained as to act as judges in their own right on the finer points of poetic language, characterisation, acting and choric spectacle. In his Presidential Address to the Classical Association (April 1988), Tony Harrison reported Lady Falkender's account of Sir Harold Wilson, before the 1964 election, when a high turn-out of voters was hoped for by Labour, saying to the then Director General of the BBC, Sir Hugh Greene, that what would be ideal BBC programme scheduling for the evening of polling day would be 'Greek drama, preferably in the original'.[34] This gives a good idea of contemporary assumptions - or caricature - of what Greek drama was like: 'heavy', 'boring', 'about a lot of gods and stuff'. Directors and companies who have wanted to stage English translations of Greek originals over the past thirty years have had to address the problem

of what potential audiences thought they would see if they bought the tickets for the play, and to break down the resistance which existed.

Modern theatre has the advantage of publicity machines and can use the press, radio and T.V. to advertise; considerably more can be said to hype a play than would have been possible, or necessary, in the *proagon*. When the audience arrives in the theatre, it is provided with a programme which usually does much more than supply a cast list; it can spell out the decisions made about the play, as well as fill in background information about the author, Athenian theatre, relevance to the current situation, expected running time, and so on. As the audience sits waiting for the play to start, it will adjust to the venue and take in the implications of size of theatre, stage shape, and presence or absence of set. Before the performance even starts, a good deal of preparatory work can be done to mediate the play and the production's approach to it to the audience.[35]

There are a number of performance elements or conventions which are integral to ancient Greek tragedy texts, and for which Athenian audiences would have needed no preparation or programme note equivalent but with which modern audiences might, for various reasons, have problems. The fact that the plays were written for open air performance in an almost circular auditorium by at most three male actors doubling all the speaking parts and wearing whole head masks, might not even occur to a modern audience seeing a production using one actor for each role and in a proscenium or studio theatre. But the presence of a chorus; the use of contrasted verse dialogue and lyric speech or song; the lack of on-stage action in any modern sense; the use of reporter or messenger to describe off-stage violence; the appearances of or references to the Gods - all these features of Greek drama would strike an uninitiated modern audience as strange, and might need mediating in order that they do not obstruct the understanding or appreciation of the play. Perhaps the most crucial set of conventions concerns the Chorus.

<u>The Chorus</u>

In his Preface to the first volume of *Arion* to be dedicated to 'The Chorus in Greek Tragedy and Culture', Herbert Golder says: 'as almost anyone who has ever seen a Greek play can attest, the chorus is every director's nightmare. It almost never 'works' '.[36] Certainly this element of theatre is one with which modern directors have particularly to grapple in order to render it dramatically viable. Those in the audience who do not know the convention may be confused, even embarrassed, by the constant presence on stage of a group of people who speak, intone or sing in unison, and seem to go off at tangents to the action to eulogise unknown gods or cities. But it is so obviously an alien convention to English theatre (setting aside, of course, conscious classicists like T.S. Eliot) that it is possibly the first point that the director of a Greek play considers when selecting a translated text. Does the original have a specific role for the chorus (as Aristotle wanted, regarding the chorus as the equivalent of another character[37]), or does it provide a kind of counterpoint to the main action? Whatever use was designed for the chorus in the original, is the current production to preserve it, or does the director in fact wish to deviate from the original in this? If a translation is being commissioned, this is a point on which director and translator-playwright need to collaborate

Two poet-playwrights are particularly informative about their intentions with regard to the chorus: Harrison, in the Presidential address already cited, spoke of his work on the *Oresteia* as part of his continuing process of reclaiming language for [uz], and recalled that 'One critic wrote that the chorus sounded like fifteen Arthur Scargills! I make no apologies. There's no earthly reason why a Greek chorus should sound like well-bred ladies from Cheltenham in white nighties'.[38] (Unless, of course, that is how that particular chorus might best be represented; it might well do for the chorus of *Ion*.) An audience should be able to recognise in the character of the chorus - however reduced it is - its particular nature as implied by the original. Harrison would contest that the language of the original gives the key to how to read the chorus's character, and that colloquialisms, home-spun aphorisms, suggestions of the recognisable hymn (as if the chorus turns to pages in *Hymns Ancient and Classical* now and then) should be suggested in the language of translation. Certainly, this would achieve the fidelity to the letter via the spirit of the text which the seeker after 'paraphrase' would wish.

Alistair Elliot, who wrote the translation of *Medea* for the 1992 Almeida production [OUdb168], writes of the need to translate, not just the substance but the form of poetry, and to recognise that in Greek tragedy, which is in a variety of poetic forms, the relation of chorus to characters is that of skeleton to flesh; the chorus bears the framework of the whole and the episodes are like illustrations which flesh out the main message. While this latter point is arguable, particularly in those later plays in which the place of the chorus has become reduced, it is certainly true that to translate both chorus and dialogue into prose, or even into scarcely undifferentiated free verse, would distort the intent as well as the form of the original. Elliot says that 'if you have ever seen a Greek tragedy performed in Greek, you may not be aware that there might be a problem in translating the choral odes. If you do not understand the play, in other words, the dancing and singing may seem the best bits. This is perhaps how it was for the original audience. But as soon as you translate it, the choral singing and dancing appears to be merely an interruption of the action'.[39] His solution for the *Medea* was to have his chorus come on 'as if they were the play; full of confidence ... do their odes as if they were what the audience came for; they are the famous group'.[40]

There are two movements in widely different areas of theatre of the twentieth century which should actually make life easier for the director trying to mediate the Greek tragic chorus to a modern audience. Brecht's ploy of using a commentary on the stage action in order to alienate the audience from too close an emotional relationship with the characters introduced the possibility of quasi-choric figures (often, 'The Narrator'), and the use of other mediums, such as songs, music, dance or mime, captions or illustrations projected on to screens to punctuate the narrative of the plot. This influence appears very early in the English counter-realist reaction of the sixties: The Common Man in Bolt's *A Man For All Seasons* (1960) and Pizarro's servant in Peter Shaffer's *The Royal Hunt of the Sun* (1964) are both quasi-choric figures; Churchill's use of modern musical style and lyrics in *Vinegar Tom* (1976), by giving a modern view of perennial concerns, saved the play from being just a historical narrative. In a play like Friel's *Living Quarters* [OUdb151], it is hard to say whether the writer may have short-cut the influence of

Brecht by borrowing directly from his original inspiration (the play is subtitled *After 'Hippolytus'*). There should be no problem for post-Brechtian audiences to accept the on-stage presence of non-participants in the action who periodically pipe up with their comments or reactions.

That such a presence also has a singing and dancing function might have seemed very alien, very inappropriate to audiences of the first half of the century, for whom even the relatively familiar comic scenes in Shakespearean tragedy needed careful playing. But the arrival of the Musical on the English stage in the fifties (*Oklahoma!* for example) opened up the possibility of a kind of mixed-genre theatre, and though initially the subject matter was romantic comedy, it widened to include more serious, even tragic, subjects first through American imports (*West Side Story, Hair)* and then in collaborative or home-grown works like *Joseph and His Amazing Technicolour Dreamcoat, Jesus Christ Superstar*, and, eventually, *Les Misérables*, and *Blood Brothers*. In theory, therefore, it should be more easy for a non-classicist audience to accept a play in which narrative is punctuated and commented on in song-and-dance routines, or by a Narrator/choric commentator, and indeed directors have experimented with these possibilities.

Verse

The next formal challenge which the director of a 'paraphrase' text encounters is the use of contrasting verse forms in the action itself and in the chorus passages: the anapaests of the chorus's entrances and exits, the contrast of iambic metres for big speeches or the *agon* with stichomythia for fast moving dialogue. Yet, as Elliot points out: 'all the main dialogue is in iambics. The lines (called trimeters) happen to be twelve syllables long, but they can easily be translated into the ten-syllable iambics which we are all used to from Shakespeare and other standard poets'.[41] It has been noted that the iambic pentameter is a comfortable rhythm for English, non-abbreviated dialogue ('It ís, indéed, a nát'ral wáy of spéech') and blank verse suits the serious but not over-elaborate or pompous mode which now has come to seem appropriate to audiences for the playing of Greek tragedy. Harrison, however, has experimented with using (for the *Oresteia*) an alliterative, four-stress form which suggests Anglo-Saxon poetry and (for

Racine's *Phèdre*), rhyming couplets which retain some fidelity to the original alexandrines, though the story is transplanted to late-Raj India.

Nor should stichomythia be a problem; again, Shakespeare has prepared the English ear for the tennis-court volley and return of alternate line dialogue.[42] Though not in iambic pentameters, the single line exchanges of Pinter (for example at the start of Act 2 of *The Caretaker*) preserve the idea of dialogue as ball-game, where, typically for Pinter, a game implies a contest or struggle for supremacy. The *agon* of single line combat survives in modern theatre.

Masks

What appear to be challenges, in the variety of language and poetic forms of the original, can, then, be aids to the dramatic structuring of performance, and, Elliot and Harrison agree, should be registered in the translation of the text. Teevan, however (in Johnstone, 1996, 96), feels that poetic translations as theatre tend to rely too much on words to the detriment of other elements of theatre, and while he as a translator-playwright is concerned to express, through poetic styles, the individual voices of characters at odds with the community or the gods, he would also wish to convey the importance to the original of music, song, spectacle - particularly the effect of masks, which constitute an ancient Greek theatrical convention not immediately apparent from the text.[43]

The use of masks is one of the conventions of Greek theatre with which, perhaps even more than the use of verse, song, dance and the presence of a chorus, it is hard for a modern audience to feel easy.[44] The convention appears to make the characters on stage iconic, and hence unrealistic. Undoubtedly, the Athenian audience had expectations about the likely behaviour of any tragedy character - even un-named types, such as Nurse or Herdsman - but the art of the Athenian playwright included the representation of the individual within the type, of the complexities to be revealed beyond the icon, and of the unexpected in the expected. The idea of attempting to act on a scale necessary for an audience of even one thousand with a naked face only slightly defined by make-up would surely seem to an Athenian audience both pathetically

primitive and barbarously indecent, but for the modern English audience, masks have, until recent experiments, been a barrier to engagement with the action and characters rather than a way of enabling understanding and communicating diverse messages.

Iconic or realistic characters?

Modern theatre often seeks to mediate Greek tragedy to the audience by trying to persuade them that the characters they see in the action have a credibility in modern terms in their emotions or their situations. This is a laudable intent, but in practice can present other problems of mediation, because the plays being performed were written for a theatre of convention not a theatre of illusion.[45] Even though an audience may be aware of the conventions that governed Greek tragedy - that it was acted by men in masks, doubling two, three, even four roles - awareness of the conventions does not make a modern audience with its expectations associated with the theatre of illusion into an Athenian one. Following those conventions would not seem to allow the kind of 'true-to-life' acting that modern audiences regard as a test of expertise in an actor. An easy way to make the characters more 'realistic' and less alien in terms of audience expectation of theatrical convention is to cast roles to individual actors of appropriate gender and ethnicity, and not to attempt working with masks, which, the argument might run, are not needed in most English theatres, since the audience can clearly see the actors' facial movements and characteristics - particularly as the modern convention of using stage make-up under strong artificial light provides an alternative to the mask, both for performer and watcher. Costume design can suggest modern resonances but in an eagerness to suggest relevance, a designer may run into a cul-de-sac of iconic inflexibility. To use anything like classical Greek costume can set the play at a remove from its audience, too, putting, as it were, the glass case of authenticity over the exhibit.[46]

Another consideration in trying to make 'real' the characters for the audience is what to do about the chorus when it seems to get in the way of direct character-audience relationship. Actors and audiences who are used to the one-to-one effect of soliloquy have problems with the long speeches of main characters who seem to be opening their most interior space to a sizeable on-

stage audience. Can we believe that we hear, for example, the most sincere emotions and thoughts of Medea or Antigone when we can see that they are speaking, not to themselves but for listeners, and listeners from whom, moreover, they expect a response? One solution is to cut the chorus down to three, two or even one, who can function as the protagonist's confidant(s). Alternatively, the chorus can be retained as an on-stage crowd, with the lyrics split into separate speeches which are allocated to more or less individualised chorus members. This approach, however, in aiming to bring all who appear on stage into a human perspective, inevitably runs up against problems if the play features gods as well as humans.

Gods

How is the human audience to relate to superhuman beings when the whole thrust of the production has been to prove how normal, how 'like us', the Greeks were? In 1994, the designers for two productions of *Ion* (by the RSC at the Barbican [OUdb143] and the Actors' Touring Company [OUdb144]), and for the RNT production of *Women of Troy* [OUdb221] were still unable to deal satisfactorily with the gods, other than making them, in contrast with the convincing accessibility of the human roles, over-dressed, sometimes almost camp, puppets. What in Greek theatre was an opportunity for spectacular effect, with use of the stage machinery, elaborate set piece structures like chariots or winged horses being flown in, gorgeous costumes, masks and crowned wigs, could run the risk of looking like pantomime in contrast with the human characters. Clearly, it would seem important to distinguish between humans and gods, even though Christian-culture audiences (unlike, perhaps, Hindu audiences) might be surprised to see how human, in their emotions and failings, are the gods of Greek tragedy. But if the whole thrust of modern mediation is to show how 'real', how 'human' are the characters of Greek tragedy, does this not inevitably lead to the gods, in their otherness from humans, being less real, less credible, less worthy of sympathy or respect? And will this effect not also inevitably lead to a bathetic or anti-climactic ending in those plays in which the gods make appearances *ex machina* to resolve the action?

Violence

Another well known convention of Greek tragedy is that violent action does not take place on stage, though deaths may (in *Hippolytus*, *Alcestis*, and, notably, in *Ajax*). Whatever the reasons for this convention in Athenian theatre - whether because the enactment of violence would pollute what was in some sense a sanctuary, or produce a miasma of evil, or whether techniques of stage fighting, physical violence or natural disasters were not yet developed which could cope with such scenes - awareness of the convention would confirm a modern audience in a naive conviction that a Greek tragedy is a wordy, static, dismal affair in which nothing much happens, and everyone stands around talking about it in an elaborate way, at several removes from the realities of life as the audience knows them.

Yet the horrors reported in Greek tragedy - the self-blinding of Oedipus, the mangling of Hippolytus, the napalming of Glauke or of Herakles, the killing of Astyanax - are quite as terrible as what could be played in a production of a Jacobean tragedy or presented in a Hammer Horror film. Even the cinema of violence (films by Kubrick, Peckinpah and Tarantino) has its own conventions of artifice, so that the special effects of violence are noted critically by audiences who appreciate them. In live theatre, after the shock and the influence of Artaud, it has become apparent that the realistic representation of violence, like much conceptual art, can be a cul-de-sac: exciting on first viewing, but leading nowhere, and increasingly tedious to re-enter. Like other forms of spectacle, it cannot be its own justification and must serve the whole piece. It should, then, be possible for a modern audience to accept the mediation of horror through the conventions of Greek tragedy, just as it would its mediation through the conventions of the cinema, or of live theatre. In each case, the violence is not real, nor is it simply narrative, but carries a metaphoric weight, and is being used by the artist - playwright or director - as one of the form's conventional tools.

In the use of narrative accounts of physical violence or horror in modern productions (such as the *Marat/Sade* (1964) of Weiss/Mitchell/Brook previously mentioned, or David Rudkin's *The Sons of Light* (1976)), it is possible to see a continuing dialogue between ancient and modern in

that the verbal impact of the Messenger's account has been reintroduced in preference to a visual re-enactment which may either cause embarrassed laughter or a numbed state of shock in which the important metaphoric point of the incident is lost.[47]

Ancient Greek drama in modern English theatres

Trying to find a 'modern' or 'credible to our audience' translation of a Greek tragedy original did, and still does, involve difficult choices, and, occasionally, a necessary compromising of the spirit as well as of the letter of the text. However, it is part of the thesis of this study that Greek tragedy has informed even commercial English theatre over the last thirty years (sometimes by circuitous and unexpected routes) to the extent that elements which might be thought of as typical of ancient Greek theatre are now lively and at work in the performance place. One would include among these elements: an awareness of theatre as the exercise of the ambiguous 'other' (from serious radical theatre dealing with feminist, gay and other political issues, right through to drag acts at rites of passage occasions like Hen Nights); the place of theatre in educating the young soon-to-be-citizen; and the recognition that theatre is not a mirror, but a representation of life - that is, that it can be used prescriptively and reconstructively, as well as descriptively. It could be said that in all these elements, theatre provides a therapy for society, and by more than just the purging of pity and terror which Renaissance (and later) commentators simplistically believed Aristotle to have described.

Of course, the kinds of changes described earlier as taking place in English theatre After-the-Kitchen-Sink were not brought about solely because of a rediscovery of the subjects and forms of Greek theatre. The reaction against realism was, as has been indicated, activated by influences nearer home both in place and time, with theatre theoretician-practitioners like Brook seeking to return theatre to its ritual, therapeutic and communal roots and free it from what he saw as stifling conventions and commercial restrictions. Brook attacked what he described as the 'Deadly Theatre' of established convention, where there is neither surprise, violence nor joy for the spirit, and called for a 'Holy Theatre' which would rediscover ritual. In works like Jellicoe's

The Sport of My Mad Mother, Rudkin's *Afore Night Come*, and Shaffer's *Equus* there are such overt recognitions of the place of ritual in life and ritual in theatre, and of the interaction of 'violence and the sacred', as to indicate that English theatre had, by the mid-seventies, been influenced by its own version of the spirit of Dionysus.[48]

During the years 1979-81, both of the great national theatres in England were involved in plans to stage major productions of Greek tragedies. The RSC beat Peter Hall and the National to it, opening in 1980 with the Barton/Cavanagh version of the history of Troy, *The Greeks* [OUdb138]. Hall's diaries (1983) reveal an irritation that his Greek production had been pre-empted, but also his determination to 'get it right', waiting for Harrison's translation, spending time with actors in mask workshops, conferring with Harrison Birtwhistle over the music. The two very different productions were inevitably compared, and judgements made about their relative merits. Of greatest positive interest to those who cared for classics (or theatre) was that such serious commitment was given in the two major English theatres to the process of 'translating' the plays for modern audiences.

The attempt made in this study to investigate the ways modern theatre has received and mediated ancient tragedy needs a caveat. The process recorded is one in which a wide range of people may be interested, from the philologist motivated by desire to ascertain the proper placing of a stress or the likely reading of an obliterated letter, to the theatre administrator who is looking for a box-office certainty, or the sports sciences undergraduate who wants to try choreographing a Greek chorus. The reasons modern English people have for coming to Greek tragedy - either on paper or in performance - are very different and very various, and have little apparent resemblance to the reasons Greeks of the fifth century had for attending the dramatic festivals. There are indeed moves to bring together scholarship and live theatre, but in spite of the best efforts of academics and of theatre practitioners who are also classicists, productions in commercial theatre continue to be more concerned with translating the theatrical potential of an original into a modern context than with putting on stage a practical exhibition of scholarly research.[49] So, academics reading this study should be prepared for the appalling liberties taken

with canonical texts by theatre people - the bastardising of original themes or myths, the gross disregard for accuracy and appropriacy in translating text into 'version'. Similarly, theatre practitioners or those concerned with theatre history must be patient with what may seem pedantic nit-picking or irrelevant hypothesising over matters of authenticity or authorial intentionality.

Each chapter in this study is concerned simultaneously with two subjects: the reception of a theatre text in performance, and the importance of that reception of that particular text to the development of modern English theatre. For its perceived 'relevance' to a number of movements in Britain in the sixties, seventies and eighties, and for the variety of versions it spawned in those decades, there is no more appropriate play with which to begin than Euripides' *Bacchae*.

NOTES

1 On translation in general, see Steiner ((1975), rev. 1992, 1998), Bassnet-McGuire (1978), Holmes (1988), Gentzler (1993) and Heylen (1993); on the particular problems of translating for the stage, see Harrison (1988), Bolt (1992), Elliot (1993), Teevan (1996) and Rudkin (1996).

2 See Holub (1984, 58-9), on Jauss's concept of 'horizons of expectations'.

3 See Genet & Hellegouarc'h (1991), Macintosh (1994), McDonald (in Clauss & Johnstone, 1997). On Irish literature and cultural politics, see Cairns & Richards (1988), and on the application of Saidian theories of 'Orientalism' to Irish culture and the insufficiency of reworking Greek texts, see Kiberd (1995).

4 Wooster, in the *SCYPT Journal* 16, writes forcefully about the work of Welsh Theatre-in-Education: 'From Oppression to Suppression'.

5 See *PI*, Jan/Feb 1998, 21.

6 Herodotus (*The Histories*, VI, 21, trs. de Selincourt (rev. Marincola, 1996), 331) gives an account of the failure of Phrynichus's *The Capture of Miletus*, a story too near to home to be acceptable as theatre: '... the audience in the theatre burst into tears. The author was fined a thousand drachmas for reminding them of their own evils, and they forbade anybody ever to put the play on the stage again'.

7 See Macintosh (1995, 54-70) for an account of the liberation of *Oedipus Rex*.

8 *Arethusa Vol. 6, n.1, Spring 1973* had Marilyn B. Arthur's 'Early Greece: The Origins of western Attitudes Toward Women', and K.J. Dover's 'Classical Greek Attitudes to Sexual Behaviour', and a Select Bibliography by Sarah Pomeroy on 'Women in Antiquity'. The Fall 1973 issue was similarly focused, with, for example, C.G. Thomas on 'Matriarchy in Early Greece'.

9 *Helios 13.2* (1986), 'Rescuing Creusa', 1-8 and 'Ten Years After Pomeroy', 9-30.

10 The final section of Pericles' funeral oration (Thucydides, II. 6, in Warner trs. (1954), 151), is often cited as a prescriptive model aimed at women, but see Hardwick (1993) for another reading of this speech; to silence Pericles' opponents. See, also, Hall in Easterling (1997, 105) on the contrast of 'Periclean' and tragic women.

11 An indication of activity in classics being reflected in theatre practice is given by a note on casting (not in the published text of 1989) in the RSC prompt copy of Timberlake Wertenbaker's *The Love of the Nightingale:*

> 'Because of the subject and location* of this play it must be performed with a mixed cast. The following characters require black actors: NIOBE, THE CAPTAIN, IRIS & ECHO (of the Chorus), THE ACTOR PLAYING PHAEDRA. For the rest, it can be either. TEREUS is white.
>
> *Black Athena, by Martin Bernal.'

There is no explanation on the prompt copy for this reference to *Black Athena*; it is presumably a kind of shorthand to indicate a need to disrupt expectations of Greeks-as-Aryans.

12 Holub (1984), 1-4.

13 Artaud's version of *The Cenci* ran for seventeen performances in 1935, and his book *Le Théâtre et son Double* appeared in 1938. See Barber, 1993.

14 Aristotle placed plot as the most important of the six elements of tragedy, above even character, and put spectacle last: 'attractive but very inartistic and ... least germane to the art of poetry' (*Poetics*, 50a, in Heath, 1996, 13). Edmunds (in Zimmerman, 1992) compares Aristotle and Artaud.

15 See also Brook (1988), and Heilpern (1977) for a personal view of Brook.

16 See Wandor (1981 & 1987), Goodman (1993 & 1996) on British theatre, and Keyssar (1984) and Case (1988) on feminist theatre with emphasis on American writers and performers. Some theatre companies (The Royal Court, Joint Stock, and Cheek by Jowl) have books devoted to their histories. Fringe or alternative theatre is featured in Kershaw & Coult (1983 & 1992) and Sandford (1995).

17 Videotaped records are in many ways as unreliable as Platonic shadows, representing one viewpoint and no audience reactions. They need fleshing out from prompt copies, publicity materials and reviews from a wide range of publications.

18 The kind of pluralist methodology I utilise is seen in the work of, for example, Steiner (1984), Macdonald (1992, and in Astley, 1991), and Macintosh (1994).

19 A dialogue between theatre past and present shows not only reappearance of archetypes of plot, situation and character, but also the rediscovery of formal elements of theatre.

20 Quoted by permission of J. M. Walton from the transcript of the International Electronic Seminar held in 1998 by the Open University Department of Classical Studies on 'The Scope and Method of Research in Reception of Classical Texts'. Walton's example shows the danger of relying on one piece of subjective secondary evidence; one photograph of the set in question (e.g. Steinberg (1985), 37) would have set the record straight.

21 Critical approaches to Greek drama follow a now well-worn track taken by Shakespeare scholarship (see Taplin (1978), 1993, 4). Some old chestnuts about authorial intentionality, sanctity of the text, 'relevance' and authenticity are addressed by Marowitz (1991) in his chapter 'Seven American Misconceptions'.

22 MacFarlane (1953, 91) quotes J. Dewey on language in communication being vehicle or medium, but adds his third category; language as exhibit.

23 See also Heylen (1993), 24.

24 For example, Bassnett-McGuire, in Holmes, Lambert and Van den Broeck (1978); Elliot (1993), Heylen (1993), Rudkin, and Teevan, in Johnstone (1996).

25 On Logue's interest in creating poetry from poetry, see Logue & Guppy (1993).

26 See Green and Handley (1995), 22, fig. 5. Although this late fifth-century Attic volute-krater clearly shows the cast and chorus of a satyr play, it remains a major source of information about masks and costume for Greek theatre.

27 Two examples serve to illustrate this: first, the production of Shakespeare's *King John* by Charles Kemble's company in 1823, notable (Salgado, 1975, 109-10) as the first real attempt at historical accuracy in costume; and second, the early film footage of Eva Palmer's choreography for the 1927 Greek language, Delphi production of *Prometheus Bound.* In both cases the curiosity value rather than the theatrical impact of the attempt is what marks it.

28 For example: Friel's *Living Quarters (After 'Hippolytus')* (1984), or Rudkin's *Hippolytus: a realisation* (1979, 1980).

29 MacKinnon (1995), 107-19, discusses the concept of 'fidelity' to the spirit of ancient drama. He argues for the greater fidelity to the spirit of the fifth-century experience of tragedy of Pasolini's *Edipo Re* than of Cacoyanni's critically better received *Iphigenia*.

30 In Johnstone (1996, 95-107), 95-6.

31 See Pickard-Cambridge (1988), Chapter II, sections 11 and 12 particularly, on early sources, and Green ((1994), rep. 1996, 89-141), and Easterling (1997, 211-27) on the later development of Greek theatre.

32 An article in *The Independent*, 24/9/98, reports the conflicting views of impresarios, directors and actors about the constituency of London audiences. Trevor Nunn, in planning a repertory style for his new look RNT, is following the move by Adrian Noble (RSC) to 'give theatre back to the people' - in the case of the RSC, by setting up a touring venue network. In *The Independent*, 23/9/98, Ian McKellen had attacked mainstream London theatre, even going so far as to question whether some members of RNT audiences could speak English. His decision to move to Leeds to work had been prompted by a desire to play to audiences from the local community. A spokeswoman for the RNT is quoted as asserting that its audience was 'predominantly middle-class, middle-aged and white'.

33 See Sandford (1995): a collection of essays, interviews and performance 'texts' which attests to the excitement felt in the mid 1960s about the potential of such anarchic theatre forms. Their legacy is still apparent in performance and installation art.

34 In Astley (1991, 429-54), 454.

35 The programme for Kaboodle Productions' (1996) *Bacchae* [OUdb110], in addition to making cross-cultural links between Dionysus and Jimi Hendrix, devotes one page to the theory of translation behind this version: 'The background sources of this version of the play are: 1) Old scholarly literal translations and parallel texts. (These are almost a foreign language in themselves.) 2) Research into the pre-classical period of Greece and the myths that reflect the time of Gods and demi-gods.' The aim is to produce 'a transcription that serves the story', and 'no attempt is made in the text or the production to produce something definitive'. This programme prepared the audience for the lively, non-scholarly, physical-theatre-influenced production they were to see.

36 Golder (1995), 1.

37 Aristotle, *Poetics*, 56a (trs. Heath, 1996, 30): 'One should handle the chorus as one of the actors; it should be a part of the whole, and should contribute to the performance not as in Euripides, but as in Sophocles.'

38 Astley (1991), 437.

39 Elliot (1993), 78.

40 ibid, 81. This is not quite the impression given in the West End performance: the three-woman chorus was a homely presence, not full of confidence so much as secure in their own ordinariness and awareness of belonging to Corinth; of having their own place in society, however humble, in a way that Medea does not. Coincidentally, I had recently seen the RSC *Murder in the Cathedral*, and was struck by the similarity of chorus costume - dark headscarves, saggy skirts and cardigans - and by the use, as in Eliot, of the 'three ages of woman' in chorus characterisation.

41 ibid. 80.

42 The exchanges between Richard and Lady Anne in I.ii. of *Richard III* are a good example (107-117, 144-154, 196-206) and they are reprised or parodied in IV.iv. in the scene between Richard and Queen Elizabeth.

43 Thus, in his *Iphigenia in Aulis*, he indicated when characters wore or removed masks - points which, he contends, are indicated in the text by references to characters' faces/expressions. So, for example, Iphigenia's innocence and reactions as a private individual are expressed by her bare face, but when she takes on her role as victim-saviour of the Greek forces, she assumes a mask.

44 It is also hard for actors to feel easy with. Jocelyn Herbert, writing on her work on the *Oresteia* and *The Trackers of Oxyrhynchus* (in Astley (1991), 281-6), says: '[English] Actors feel obliterated when their faces are not seen'. An article in *The Independent*, 14 August 1996 by Georgina Brown, on Sir Peter Hall's rehearsals for the *Oedipus Plays* describes a cast confronting masks in terms of people who feel threatened. Hall says: 'Put a mask on a group of actors and, if they do anything at all, they become very primitive ... It's a completely liberating device ... if it's not working you can see the actor underneath and that's horrible, that's false.'

45 See Trypanis (1979) on the differences between theatres of convention and illusion. Lada-Richards (1997) addresses this issue from the standpoint of acting theory, writing of the possibility of using Brechtian or Stanislavskian approaches to Athenian comedy and tragedy.

46 David Stuttard, translator/director for The Actors of Dionysus, recalls that for the gods in the 1996 production of *Trojan Women* [OUdb837], the designer had actually made costumes and masks based on figures on Greek vases, but these just did not work when tried on - 'too pantomime' - so a more neutral design was adopted.

47 The critical jury is still out over the work of Sarah Kane. Her first play, *Blasted* (1995) and her *Phaedra's Love* (1996) required realistic playing of stomach-turning scenes of violence. Her third play, *Cleansed*, used a more representational than realistic approach, but presented a number of horrific shocks to the audience's collective system.

48 Jellicoe's preface to the 1964 edition of *Sport* explained how the play had taken the form it did: 'It is an anti-intellect play not only because it is about irrational forces and urges but because one hopes it will reach the audience directly through rhythm, noise and music and their reaction to basic stimuli.' (1964, 5) Believing theatre to be a necessary ritual in the community, Jellicoe moved out of London commercial theatre to work with community theatre in Dorset.

49 Taplin (1977 and 1978), Walton (1991) and Wiles (1997) have all addressed themselves to problems of ancient and modern staging. Academics outside Britain who record their own experience of directing student productions include Mary Kay Gamel (California SC), Toph Marshall (Montreal); Greg McCart (S. Queensland). Examples in England of classicist theatre practitioners are David Stuttard (Actors of Dionysus), and Russell Shone (Chloë Productions). Peter Meineck, who started Aquila productions in England, is now based at the University of S. Carolina.

CHAPTER 2

THE *BACCHAE*

This chapter, which draws on material relating to late twentieth-century English productions of versions of the *Bacchae*, is concerned with the resonances playwrights have found between Euripides' play and currents in late twentieth-century society. The focus is on those aspects of the original which relate to women perceived to be possessed of a certain power - a power which is itself, because of its Dionysiac nature, strange, ambivalent and threatening to male norms, and which is the more apparently dangerous to those male norms because wielded by or channelled through women. I do not, therefore, privilege some themes which have, justifiably, preoccupied commentators on the *Bacchae*: the nature of Euripides' statement on religious belief and cultic practice; the struggle of rational against irrational personalised in Pentheus and Dionysus (except insofar as this is seen as a male versus female opposition), or the psychological realism of the characterisation of male characters. This is not, of course, to say that these original themes have not exercised the minds of late twentieth-century playwrights; Shaffer and Rudkin particularly have dealt with them, the former with the god against man struggle,[1] the latter with a more structuralist revisiting of archetypal narratives of sick lands, sacrifice and scapegoating.[2]

The aspect of English theatre with which this chapter is particularly concerned is its revivified and increasingly multiform nature over the second half of this century. The contest of Pentheus and Dionysus is an apt metaphor for what happened to post-war English theatre when it encountered the successive challenges of social change, the drug culture, feminism, and, eventually, Thatcherite capitalism. These encounters gave rise to a number of versions of the *Bacchae*, with modern 'translators' adapting the original to serve specific contemporary situations. As is always the case with translations, writers do not start from the same premises,

or share the same information, preoccupations or assumptions about their source. However, it is possible to identify, in the modern versions singled out for analysis in this chapter, responses to the original's challenging treatment of the problem of women possessed of and possessed by a more-than-human power; the implications of that power for society as a whole, and the implications for the individual woman of the exercise of that power.

The context of the original play

When considering the particular 'transgressive and dangerous women'[3] of the *Bacchae* and its late twentieth-century descendants, one can distinguish between the Chorus and the sole female role in the play, Agave. The Chorus of Lydian women who have followed the Dionysus/ exarchos across Tmolus to Thebes are true Bacchantes; Agave represents those Theban women driven mad and turned into maenads by the power of Dionysus. Girard (1977, 138), designates these two groups as respectively 'authentic' and 'inauthentic', but wonders whether the portraits of each type may not, in the play, be equally distorted for dramatic purposes; the 'homicidal frenzy' of the 'inauthentic bacchae' balanced by the 'idyllic portrait of the bacchanal' (139). Both groups, the non-rational followers of a cult which offers release through a form of intoxication or 'engoddedness', and those who, for their resistance to the god, are driven mad, are represented in modern plays which own a debt to the *Bacchae*. Also of particular interest is the woman who, as leader or 'priestess' of the inauthentic maenads, destroys a defining aspect of herself in carrying out, as the god's tool, the sacrificial murder of her son. It may also be argued that Pentheus, too, in his female disguise, becomes an 'inauthentic' or faux-bacchant, and self-destructs as man, attempting a visual self-construction as woman, before being destroyed as sacrificial animal.

The maenads of Euripides' posthumously performed play (405 B.C.) bore, perhaps, not much resemblance to contemporary 'real' maenads. Visual images of maenads on pots from the sixth century through to post 405 B.C. incorporate certain iconic staples which are, surely not coincidentally, decoratively satisfying[4]- women with crinkle-waved loose hair, sometimes interlaced with snakes; lithe limbs revealed in movements of dance or vigorous activity; the

natural detail of ivy-wreathed, cone-topped thyrsi; the pleasing contrast of domestic, artificial, and natural coverings in patterned textiles and animal skins; and in some cases, small animals or babies brandished as booty or sacrificial prey.[5] Attractive and appropriate motifs for wine vessels, these maenads may have owed a good deal to the theatrical glamorisation of the type by playwrights before Euripides. In 467, a Lycurgus trilogy by Polyphrasmon was produced; Aeschylus himself produced two Dionysus tetralogies, and in 415, Xenocles won a first prize with a *Bakchai* play.[6] The bacchantes may, it seems, have had a credibility and identity as a literary-artistic image which was quite distinct from the Dionysiac cultic activities of women celebrants. Seaford (37), having summed up evidence of bacchic activity, concludes that:

> Although it is clear from all this that maenadism was actually practised (i.e. not merely imagined by poets and artists), it is difficult to know precisely what this practice included. Although *Bacchae* describes mythical rather than actual maenads, various details of the description may correspond to actual practice. But we do not know whether this actual practice included exotic activity ... The male imagination may easily have endowed with savagery rituals from which males were excluded and which were celebrated in wild places.

Dodds (xxii), had gone so far as to assert that:

> By Euripides' time there was little or nothing in the official Athenian cults which could inspire the descriptions in the *parodos* and the messenger speeches, or had any real relevance to the savage and primitive story of Pentheus' [*sic*] punishment.

The implication is that by the time Euripides, exiled in Macedonia (where, however, Dodds says, 'the Dionysiac cult was still in the 4th century sufficiently primitive to include such rites as snake handling' (xxiii)), was revisiting the Dionysus/Pentheus story with his own agenda, back in Athens the respectable citizen wives and daughters were showing no more than a restrained ecstatic reverence to the established cult at the Anthesteria and the Lenaia, while the women's role at the City Dionysia was interpreted and undertaken by actors and by young men at the transitional point of passage into manhood.[7] What had been most threatening about the Dionysiac cult's appeal was that it deliberately invited and invoked a disruption of order, taking women away from the restraints of *oikos* and *polis* into the wilderness, allowing them as celebrants to become *entheos*; other, indeed, than the 'other ' they already were. Because Dionysus combined patronage of theatre with tutelary responsibility for viticulture, and, himself a foreigner, epitomised the wild and rampantly fertile world beyond the city limits, it is not surprising that his worship should involve apparent potential for extreme licence, but, because

the cult was a recognised and accepted one, there may well have been a (male dictated) hidden agenda of control. So, a man might allow the women of his *oikos* to attend the Lenaia secure in the knowledge that whatever they did was done within the limits of custom and ritual, and was sanctioned by the wider community for the sake of the general good. Seaford (44), talking of the community's need 'to renew and unite itself through the imagined entry of a powerful outsider', points out that this unity requires 'the symbolic incorporation of marginal elements', and that, since women constituted a marginal element, the acceptance of Dionysus in all his 'otherness' signalled also 'its integration of women'. Elsewhere, moreover (1994, 7.d), Seaford suggests that the destruction of the Theban royal house in Euripides' play may be emblematic of the need of the *polis*, for its own health, to destroy any *oikos* which becomes too powerful, too obviously autonomous (and consequently exerts excessive control over its females). To obviate such drastic measures, Dionysiac worship actually becomes a tool of state control, releasing all ages and classes of women temporarily from the absolute power of their *kyrios*.

The extent to which the cult was indeed integrated into the *polis* is indicated by the importance of the great City Dionysia with its superstructure of performance-related administration and politicking.[8] The Anthesteria, too, which, as the oldest Dionysiac festival at Athens, retained perhaps more of the primitive non-political nature of a new wine celebration, brought Dionysus home to the centre of the *polis* with the sacred 'marriage' ritual with the wife of the archon basileus. Dodds (xxii) suggests, however, that Euripides may, in his contribution to the dramatic revival of the Dionysus/Pentheus myth, have been taking the tone of contemporary interest, developing during the Peloponnesian war, in new, foreign orgiastic cults - of Sabazius, Attis, and Adonis.[9] Herodotus had been quite categorical about Dionysus's Egyptian manifestation as Osiris (the death/dismemberment/ fertility link not being obvious in Euripides' version, unless we assume displacement of the sacrificial role from Dionysus to Pentheus), linking him to Isis-Demeter, just as Tiresias is to do.[10] Dionysus is in the process of being rediscovered and re-energised; familiar but strange, both 'ours' and 'other'.

So perhaps what in Dionysiac worship was even more important to the health of the community than the curbing of individual *oikoi* was the channelling or sublimation of those uncertain and dangerous energies of which even the best and most civilised women seemed possessed. Their physical weakness and (as Aristotle saw it[11]) botched anatomy meant that their emotional and moral capacities were likely to be similarly distorted; they were prone to irrationality, over-emotionalism, deviousness. If they got drunk, sang, danced, entertained male visitors - behaved, in short, like *hetairai* - they would disgrace their family, and this may be the common (Athenian) fear, not just his personal, mythic anxiety, which Euripides' Pentheus expresses. The rituals involved in the Eleusinian mysteries of Demeter or in the Panathenaea did not wholly cater for this element of female liminality; in both ceremonies, male worshippers were involved, and though the Mysteries involved dancing and dramatic re-enactment of myth by female participants, solemnity and order were important aspects of celebration. Even the Thesmophoria, which was a female-only festival, was an attempt to control fertility by ritual balance:

> Only free women of unblemished reputation were permitted to participate in the Thesmophoria. They were chaste for three days in preparation for the festival and continued to abstain during the course of it. Yet they indulged in the foul language and obscenities characteristic of fertility rituals.[12]

(And it was this earthy aspect of the festival in which women ruled that provided Aristophanes with his material for *Thesmophoriazusae.)*

Ritual maenadism, on the other hand, involved a number of subversions and transgressions; it became licit for women to leave the *oikos* and the *polis* (both male-controlled spaces), and go out into the wild; young, old, married, unmarried, wives, virgins - all had rights in the worship of the alien god. Domestic, political and class boundaries, as well as that which divides 'us' from 'other' (Greek/foreigner, male/female, citizen/slave) - all these demarcation lines might be, again, licitly, crossed by maenads holily mad or out of their 'proper' minds. In itself, the requirement, or intention of becoming *entheos* - through drink, or through extreme physical activity (not necessarily, despite Pentheus's anxieties, sexual) - is an astonishing deliberate surrender of the virtue of restraint. Either *mainas* (mad) or *bakchais* (frenzied), the maenads are

liberated from normal constraints to be other than themselves. Only the recognition of the need to channel a potentially subversive and threatening 'otherness' in women (or a rationalisation of that need into a requirement to act out ancient fertility/sacrifice rituals) could sanction such dangerous freedom, which is, however, contained by the forms and expectations of ritual. Rehm (1992, 13), while admitting that 'we cannot know what the experience of maenadism was like', contests that its 'organized nature militates against the popular notion of mass hysteria and uncontrolled violence'.

The sacrificial element in Bacchic celebration inevitably attracts debate even by critics who are primarily concerned with literary matters; Euripides' *Bacchae* is the major extant literary text on the theme, and focuses on the perverted sacrifice of an unknowing, unaccepting victim. Foley (1985, Ch. 5) in her section on 'Ritual and the death of Pentheus', enumerates the elements of the process of sacrifice as they occur in the action, either perverted or ironic: the *pompe, agon, komos*; the dressing and consecration of the victim, its acquiescence, the pelting, the moment of silent reverence, the killing and the division of the body. She wisely urges caution in using an evolutionist approach on literary texts, since one is tempted into anachronisms and hypotheses. Girard (1977, 131) categorically says that the murder of Pentheus 'is performed in accordance with Dionysiac practice', and talks of 'the rite' (132) ambiguously, not making it clear whether sacrificial *sparagmos* generally, or Pentheus's murder in particular, or both together, are intended. Seaford puts emphasis on the literary construct's implicit recording of ritual, while showing that theatre can provide an enactment nearer to the mythical actuality than can religious ritual:

> [aetiological myth] typically spells out what cannot be fully enacted in the ritual (i.e. the 'death' of the initiand). (42)

A structuralist examination of the place of ritual sacrifice as a mark of transition, or a communal act of implication may help with a reading of the *Bacchae*, but does not necessarily explain everything about the theatrical function of the distorted 'sacrifice' in the play. Both the element of communal guilt and the question of perversion of role (specifically, mother and priestess) clearly need to be examined in regard to the *Bacchae*.

There are other features of Dionysiac worship explicitly mentioned in the play: for example, *oreibasia,* the winter mountain-dancing practised biennially by women at Delphi - no gentle ramble, but a physically exacting venture, since Pausanias asserts that 'the women went to the very summit of Parnassus (over 8,000 ft. high)' (Dodds, xiii-xiv). This sounds a very different matter from the ecstatic immediacy of '*eis oros eis oros*' of the Chorus at lines 116 and 165 - suggesting the indifference to physical pain and the conviction of increased or unlimited capability which Dionysiac possession seems to give to devotees. Perhaps the Delphi *oreibasia* was an extreme example, but clearly some degree of (relatively) strenuous activity was required of participants in the ceremonies, in order, as Rehm (1992, 13) puts it, to translate 'physical exhaustion into spiritual well-being and [merge] individual consciousness with that of the group'. Dodds (xiv-xvi) writes of dervishes, the Tarantella and St. Vitus' Dance, and the last twenty years have added marathon and long-distance running to the list of physical activities which are known to produce a sensation of euphoria - a 'high' - before eventual exhaustion. (The same feeling of exhilaration as part of a group activity is felt by amateur actors working towards a single performance, where dedication of considerable physical and mental activity to a species of *agon* may be said to reproduce tolerably accurately the experience of working as part of a chorus for the dramatic festivals.) The very idea of women of mixed ages and status dancing in a semi-public way, outside (in contrast to the enclosed and private dancing in the Demeter mysteries), must have had transgressive overtones. As is still the case in modern Greece, dancing for enjoyment was a male group activity - a peaceable form of physical exercise which encouraged male group bonding.[13] The dancing or running constitutes part of the *pompe*, and the *agon* which occurs as the sacrificial element of the ceremony involves celebrants in a state of 'engoddedness' - though to what extent they are 'out of their minds' it is impossible to say.

Similarly, the *omophagia* which is 'referred to in the regulations of the Dionysiac cult at Miletus (276 B.C.) and attested by Plutarch and others' (Dodds, xvi) may have been as ad hoc and horrific as the butchery described by the Messenger at 735-47, or as ritually ordered and organised as the first day of the grouse-shooting season. Clearly, the elements which, structuralists point out, are included to help define what divides man from animals (flesh eaten

raw, torn apart, not cut with manufactured blades, and communality of guilt-implication) are going to be those which invoke distaste or indeed revulsion from 'civilised' humanity, just as they are meant to. It is something a civilised man or woman would never normally do - and so is precisely the kind of activity to be expected of a worshipper of Dionysus, the god who disrupts boundaries, and deals in the liminal areas between god and man, man and beast. Euripides has his Bacchae make only one (approbatory) reference to *omophagia* (139), and recoil in horror from the reality of Agave's invitation to feast on her catch (1184), subsequently humouring (or are they responding with heavy irony?) her self-congratulatory praise of the Bacchic hunter and his band. However 'normal' ritual *sparagmos* and *omophagia* were in 405, the point being made is that Agave's act was transgressive, not just in terms of the 'normal' or *nomoi* of the *oikos* or *polis*, but in terms of Bacchic worship itself.

Euripides' Bacchic Chorus

A civic congregation of bacchae might be expected to divide into three groups, imitating the mythical instances of maenadism: three daughters of Minyas at Orchomenos, three daughters for Proetus, three daughters for Cadmus. But the 'authentic' bacchae of the Chorus are a lone group, following their *exarchos*, whose nature is (surely deliberately) ambiguous.[14] They are introduced by Dionysus as foreigners, and their outsider status is to protect them against Pentheus's repression, since it is the women of Thebes, and more especially those of his own *oikos*, whose supposedly outrageous behaviour he is determined to restrain, by force if necessary. It was, of course, an established convention that the Chorus should neither leave the stage, be fragmented other than into semi-choruses, nor take part in the action as such. Theirs is a normative voice - but not an Athenian normative voice, nor an 'authorial voice'; rather, it represents the norm of maenadism - whatever Euripides wanted that to be. Goldhill (1986, 267 ff.) argues the case for the ambiguity of the chorus:

> The chorus's role is often important rather for its insufficient understanding of events, for its failing attempts to offer complete explanations, for the juxtaposition of the passionate individualism of the hero to a less extreme, more traditional attitude. (271)

In this play, however, the 'passionate individualism' is Pentheus's repressiveness, and the 'more traditional attitude' is the cultic observation of the Lydian maenads. The recognisable (to their relatives in the audience) young men of the chorus, completing, perhaps, by their participation, the Athenian equivalent of the Duke of Edinburgh's Gold Medal Award,[15] are permitted a degree of 'playing the other',[16] but are kept within the bounds of appropriate behaviour; it is for the professional actors to play out the tragic transgressions and outrages. Hence, the *parodos*, which gives a list of the characteristics of maenads, starts with an affirmation of the holiness of the rites and its true observers (72-7), before proceeding to the physicalities: the ivy-crowned thyrsus (80-1), the snakes in the hair (102-4), the use of specific plants for garlands (106-10), the fawnskins, the dancing in the mountains to the beat of drums. The epode evokes the group ecstasy of the maenads (155-67), and asserts as normal the miracles of food and drink from rock and soil to which the Messenger is later to bear witness at 704-11, but may reserve the extreme sign of possession, the *omophagia* (139) for a single celebrant. Because of textual difficulty here, Dodds (86), Seaford (164) and Kirk (1979, 40, n. to 135ff) signal the possibility of alternative readings ; either Dionysus himself, or the *exarchos*, or the individual possessed celebrant may be intended, in which case, the focus on an individual would distance the act of ritual barbarism from the on-stage chorus. The implication is that such climactic moments of Bacchic celebration occur in the wild, with Dionysus present in spirit and possession of the body of his *exarchos*, if not in epiphany.

The first stasimon, after the condemnation of Pentheus's unholiness and folly (where he thinks he is exhibiting holiness, in persecuting blasphemous immorality, and wisdom), presents the image of 'peace elsewhere', specifically, in the second strophe, on Aphrodite's island, or Pieria, where in the presence of the Muses and Desire: 'it is lawful for bacchants to celebrate mysteries' (415-6, Seaford, 91). Thus, discreetly, maenadic sexual activity is acknowledged; it is an expression of freedom and happiness, not the furtive undergrowth gropings of Pentheus's fears, nor, indeed, the boisterous congress with satyrs which pottery delighted in picturing. But 'peace elsewhere' is also cited, at the end of the second antistrophe, in the minds of those who accept the gift of Dionysus to escape from the stresses of life, and, more importantly, avoid the

presumption or over-reaching which causes those stresses. This yearning for escape through bacchic celebration is given, in the third stasimon, a hard edge, since it is coupled with the 'what is wisdom?' query of the end of the first stasimon, reworked into a suggestion that what everyman seeks is, in fact, neither wisdom nor peace, but power over his enemies. At this point in the play - the turning point, since the audience waits, with the chorus, to see whether Pentheus has taken Dionysus's bait - the chorus implies a conflict of desires in humankind: the desire for a quiet life (having survived the nets of the hunter, the rigours of labour on sea and shore, the often deluding hopes and ambitions) and the instinctive and unavoidable desire to possess and exert power over others. Personally, the chorus opines, 'the person whose life is happy from day to day, him I call blessed' (910-11, Seaford, 117). It should be enough for mankind to be able to say: 'well, we got through that one alright' - but maenads, in addition to recognising what leads to a quiet life, are initiated into the potential for bacchic high spots as well.

In spite of that possible implication in the epode of the parodos that the audience is unlikely to witness any of those high spots of bacchic experience on stage, it can be argued that they do see the chorus possessed. The second and fourth stasimons show how threatening, indeed, potentially dangerous, a pack of women (the collective noun is used advisedly) can be. Pentheus's threat against the bacchae at 511-14 is rendered more frightening to them because he has shown he has the power to implement his more serious one against the god himself in the person (as the maenads assume) of their leader. During their condemnation of Pentheus in the antistrophe (538-55), the chorus whip themselves up to a state of excitement by enumerating the affronts offered to the god by the king's action against their 'fellow-dancer' and the threats against them. The Bacchae are shown to be most dangerous, because most active, irrational and inspired, when threatened. Their invocation (however mad they are) is effective at least for them, since it produces a miraculous freeing of their leader by the god's manipulation of natural disaster forces.

Dramatically, it may be, the invocation of Dionysus is most effectively answered, not by attempting spectacular realism but by preserving ambiguity. This is effected if Dionysus's

speeches in dialogue with the chorus are from offstage, and the palace earthquake and rekindled fire at Semele's tomb are conjured in the audience's minds by the work of the chorus - or to put it more prosaically, following Verrall and the rationalists (see Dodds, 148), they are a figment of the chorus's communal imagination. Jan Kott - whom no-one would describe as a rationalist - considers that this is (and would have been in Greek theatre) an appropriate way of conveying that possession of the mind and body. Having likened the invocations of the chorus to the prophecies of Isaiah, to medieval hymns and Negro spirituals,[17] he contends that 'on a bare stage, Greek as well as modern, the shaking of the earth is confirmed by the shaking of bodies. The miracles of the mysteries do not need pyrotechnics' (Kott, 1974, 204).

If the second stasimon and the subsequent 'palace earthquake scene' have given the audience a taste of what bacchae are like when possessed by communal emotion, the messenger's account of the Theban maenads' *sparagmos* of the cattle, and their subsequent triumphal rampage through the villages of Hysiae and Erythrae make clear what such group possession can effect. From this point, possessed maenadic activity passes into the province of the Cadmeian women, orchestrated by Dionysus. Certainly the chorus has the function, in the fourth stasimon, of summoning Frenzy to take over the Thebans (the Lydians now know this is Dionysus's plan: they are not going to be involved or implicated in the vengeance he will take on Pentheus and his family), and they also pronounce final judgement on him, reprising their description of Pentheus (538-40) as monstrous, earth-born, ungodly. They anticipate the horror of Agave's murder of him, and the butchery that vengeance will exact. But they are the channels of Dionysus's judgement only, not its engines, and though exultant, as they should be, on Dionysus's behalf, at the news of Pentheus's death, receive Agave with pity not condemnation or triumphant mockery. To the end of the play, they remain unpolluted by their 'inauthentic' sisters' activities, and deliver the platitude of the final tag at a remove from the horror. This, in itself, is one of Dionysus's gifts; like the bacchic chorus, the audience has the freedom to walk away from tragedies performed under Dionysus's authority, and in his theatre.

'Bacchae' in the late twentieth century: social types and dramatic versions

The late sixties saw the coming of age of the post-war generation. It was a decade in which 'youth culture' was invented (not necessarily by youth), and in which boundaries which had previously been clearly delineated (between child and adult, male and female, respectable and criminal) were to be disrupted by two divergent drives: the invitation to ' turn on and drop out', and the challenge of radical activism, political or feminist. The decade since the trend-setting of Osborne's *Look Back in Anger* (1956) had seen theatre branch out also into absurdism (in the work of, for example, Harold Pinter and N.F. Simpson) and 'soft-protest' (for example in the rock musical, *Hair*). Alternative theatre and performance art provided channels for feminist and politically active voices. One route for dramatic protest was to rewrite canonical works: in the case of history, with the 'community play' (which, in contrast to history narratives like Bolt's *A Man For All Seasons*, purported to address the 'people's history'); in the case of Christian religious belief, versions of the life of Christ as different as Dennis Potter's *The Son of Man* (1969) and the musicals *Jesus Christ Superstar* (1970) and *Godspell* (1972); and in the case of literature, in versions of classics such as Shakespeare[18] and 'the Greeks'. The *Bacchae* appeared particularly appropriate for re-creation in the late sixties and early seventies, seeming as it did to deal with alternative cults, with female activism, with the defeat of tyrannic masculinity by ecstatic, alcohol/drug-inspired group activity, orchestrated by an androgynously charismatic leader.

Hippy maenads and *The Disorderly Women*

John Bowen's reflective foreword to his revised acting text of *The Disorderly Women* [OUdb120] begins with the acknowledgement that 'at particular times [myths] may seem to have a particularly strong relevance, and it seems that now - April 1969, as I write - is such a time for the myth of the Bacchae', and he notes the versions by Duffy, Robert Bolt, Rodney Milgate and the improvised version [OUdb128] by The Performance Group in New York: *Dionysus in '69*.[19] These versions had different statements to make in revisiting the myth; for his part, Bowen declares a pre-war generation interest in the rule of reason over instinct:

> I have attempted to make explicit what may be implicit in Euripides' play, that the myth of the Bacchae is primarily about the fight between Apollo and Dionysus, in which Dionysus wins.
> Put this to someone born after 1945, and he may tell you, "Quite right. Dionysus ought to win. Instinctive behaviour is what life is for."... If my 1969 self were to return to 1945, it could only say, "I have seen the future, and it doesn't work". *The Disorderly Women*, then, is a work of pessimism.[20]

Bowen admits that his association of the 'hippies' with drugs may be seen as an unfair oversimplification, but views the hippie culture as it was generally perceived as the one that most nearly approximated to a modern equivalent of the Bacchae of the myth :

> the philosophy of the hippies is private, is interior, is anti-social and anti-logical, and does include an approval of the hallucinatory drugs. There is also another way in which hippy life fits the myth. Hippies are not rationalists. (14)

By 'interior', we should not understand 'isolationist', and by 'anti-social', external to, not antagonistic to, society. But the hippy phenomenon had a happy appropriacy for writers looking for modern Bacchae in the late sixties. To an impartial observer who knew his/her Dionysiac rituals, a group of Flower Children, following their favoured bands to an out-of-town venue (Woodstock, in 1964, provided the model for British imitations), to all-night 'be-ins' and 'love-ins', could well have resembled a *thiasos* following its *exarchos*. They were part of a recognisable cult, and some indeed had tenuous connections with Eastern religions (Hare Krishna, Buddhism). They got high on music, dance, sex, drugs, and drink, and adopted dress which combined the feminine (long hair, patterned textiles, face and body paint, jewellery) with the wild (animal skins and fur, flowers, real or decorative). These voluntarily out-of-their-minds maenads, whether or not they subsequently reassimilated into 'respectable' society, took on for the duration the status of disempowered 'other' in WASP culture - and especially was this so in America where they were perceived to be opting out from or kicking against the restraints of both the *oikos* (in outraging domestic *mores* by excesses sexual, alcoholic or hallucinogenic) and the *polis* (in allying themselves with draft-dodging, or with anti-Vietnam war or pro-civil rights causes). The appropriately theatrical expression of anti-war, 'Peace and Love' hippyism came in 1967/8 with the rock musical *Hair*.

As with cultic maenadism, the highly self-presentational sixties youth culture, while appearing dangerously subversive in its manifestations or celebration, was to a large extent contained, channelled and manipulated; gurus, impresarios, managers and agents oversaw and benefited financially from what appeared to be a spontaneous and anti-establishment culture. A realistic view of this situation might evoke a response similar to Pentheus's cynicism about Tiresias's acceptance of the new god:

> By introducing this new god, another one, to mankind you want to examine birds and have fees from burnt offerings. (256-7, Seaford, 81)

But this alien and apparently uncontrolled movement seemed as threatening and destructive of all moral values to the short-haired over-twenty-five year-olds of the period as Dionysus and all his maenads, authentic or inauthentic, seem to Pentheus. As Kott (1974, 188) says, 'Pentheus looks at the Stranger the way a sheriff in Arizona would look at a bearded guru who has invaded the town with a gang of tattered girls'.

In *The Disorderly Women,* though he was attempting more than a 'free adaptation of the *Bacchae*' (Bowen, 1969, 13), Bowen found himself drawn back to the speeches of the original at many points. But, because he felt he needed to be able to show the psychological pegs on which Dionysus is able to hang the action, he inserted exchanges between Pentheus and Agave, and this allowed discussion of the possession (by hallucinogenic drugs) which these maenads experience. It is impossible for the possessed to explain to outsiders what the experience is like, or to convey to the rational mind the benefits of irrationality. Voluntarily to surrender self-possession, as Bowen's maenads do by taking drugs, is, to a reasonable person, irresponsibility verging on criminality - unless there is the excuse of madness. Agave finally acknowledges her son's rationality as being humane:

> What would you have said if you had lived,
> 'Diminished responsibility'? You would have said,
> 'We don't hang people in Thebes.'
> What would you have done with me? -
> A woman mad with drugs who killed her son.
>
> (Act Two)

In Bowen's play, the six-woman group of maenads served the main focus: the relationship of Pentheus to his parents - dead Echion figuring, in Bowen's mind, as vital to an understanding of how Pentheus reacts to Dionysus, and to his own mother's inexplicably trangressive and irresponsible behaviour. The bacchae drop out of Pentheus's society, as hippies did from theirs. Bowen was not concerned with feminist issues, and these had indeed already been touched on by Maureen Duffy in her version, *Rites* (to be discussed at more length later). However, four years after these two plays, another version of the *Bacchae,* Wole Soyinka's *The Bacchae of Euripides: A Communion Rite* [OUdb285], was to give the chorus a more central role, though confusing the issue by having his Bacchantes (who double with the 'vestals of Eleusis' who appear in the first scene) join forces with a group of (ethnically mixed) slaves.

Soyinka's bacchae: varieties of release

In 1973, Soyinka, already an established writer of versions of Nigerian myth, was commissioned by the National Theatre to adapt the *Bacchae*. What resulted was an example of what Cartledge (1993, 176) surely has in mind when he refers to the *Bacchae* being used as 'a hymn of counter-cultural liberationist rebellion'. On to the myth of sacrificial scapegoating and ritual *sparagmos,* transformed because of the vengeance of the god to perversion and horror, Soyinka grafts a post-colonial commentary on slavery and ethnic repression. In addition, as his production note makes clear, Soyinka intends the play as 'a communal feast, a tumultuous celebration of life' (1973, xiii). This is a great deal - probably too much - to ask of one play.

Soyinka's Chorus does include the Bacchantes who have come with Dionysus from Lydia, but is led and dominated by the predominantly male slaves - who are not, it should be noted, satyrs. Soyinka requires that his Chorus should be as ethnically mixed as possible, but that 'Solely because of the 'hollering' style suggested for the Slave Leader's solo in the play, it is recommended that this character be fully negroid' (1973, Production note). The otherness of originally female bacchae is thus decisively shifted to racial otherness, and the sexual ambiguity of Euripides' Dionysus, together with Pentheus's gender confusion, are ducked issues. Dionysus

is, the stage directions insist: 'a being of calm rugged strength, of a rugged beauty, not of effeminate prettiness' (1973, 1). Moreover, when Pentheus is dressed by Dionysus, he believes he is wearing his armour, having totally rejected the suggestion that women's dress would afford him concealment: 'I shall go as I am, or not at all' (71). The play is, consequently, more to do with repression and the abuse of power than with the liminalities of the original. A threatened revolt by the slaves is defused and their energies diverted into the worship of Dionysus, who is recognised as god of slave and free, and Pentheus and the royal family are punished for their repressiveness as well as their denial of the god.

Soyinka has Dionysus interrupt the beating of the scapegoat, Tiresias, and then demand the recognition and worship of the Eleusis mysteries celebrants. The Slave Leader follows the vestals' conversion with an opportunist attempt at persuading his fellows that their hour of revolt has come:

> You hesitant fools! Don't you understand?
> Don't you know? We are no longer alone -
> Slaves, helots, the near and distant dispossessed!
> This master race, this much vaunted dragon spawn
> Have met their match. Nature has joined forces with us.
> Let them reckon now, not with mere men, not with
> The scapegoat bogey of a slave uprising
> But with a new remorseless order, forces
> Unpredictable as molten fire in mountain wombs.
>
> (8)

At the appearance of the Bacchantes, the Slave Leader asserts his leadership of the *thiasos*, which will now include the male slaves as well as the female maenads. 'A god goes by many names', he says; 'I have long been a spokesman for the god'. Inasmuch as he has been the spokesman for the spirit of resistance to established authority, the voice of the alien in enslaved exile, this is so. The 'old, old hymn to godhead' which he then leads is an elaboration on the second strophe and the epode of the parodos (105-19), but the *nebentext* is here almost of more interest than the overwritten *haupttext:*[21]

> *Music. It has the strange quality - the nearest familiar example is the theme-song of 'Zorba the Greek' - with its strange mixture of nostalgia, violence and death. The scene which follows needs the following quality: extracting the emotional colour and temperature of a*

> *European pop scene without degenerating into that tawdry commercial manipulation of teenage mindlessness. The Slave Leader is not a gyrating pop drip. His control emanates from the self-contained force of his person, a progressively deepening presence. His style is based on the lilt and energy of the black hot gospellers who themselves are often the first to become physically possessed ... The effect on his crowd is, however, the same - physically - as would be seen in a teenage pop concert. From orgasmic moans a surrogate climax is reached.*
>
> (18)

This is only part of Soyinka's long stage direction at this point. His instructions attempt to suggest the impression he wants the scene to give: while recognising the potency of an existing music and drug culture in the West, he is anxious that his maenads should not be degraded to the level of 'pop fans'; 'that tawdry commercial manipulation of teenage mindlessness'. While the phenomenon of teenage girls being possessed to the point of delirium by their adoration for an idol was a familiar one, it was also one which, Soyinka felt, degraded his Bacchantes, and one which he wanted to avoid. Somewhere between the naive but potent sexuality of such a group, and the other possible contemporary point of comparison - the large, vocal ladies of an evangelical fundamentalist Christian church - must be the effect that Soyinka wanted, overcoming the 'overall ugliness [of] manifested emotion' with a feeling of the 'intensely energised spiritual rapture...awesome depths of self-release'.

This elaborate piece of authorial instruction indicates, perhaps surprisingly, a point of contact with the original, in consideration of how the chorus master in charge of the Bacchic chorus might have achieved what is, in Euripides' play, a much more varied and demanding range of responses to the text from his team. Euripides' chorus master could build on shared knowledge about bacchic ritual, and could assume that the maenad chorus would have certain religious resonances for the audience. Soyinka had had to try to construct equivalent resonances, but could not assume the same shared knowledge - for example, of Yoruba religion - in his British audience. It has to be said that Soyinka's Bacchantes are something of a potential embarrassment; they do not, perhaps, date their play into a period piece in the way that Bowen's bacchae do, but in his attempt to ensure the right effects, and his eagerness to achieve a Graeco-Brito-Yoruba cross-culturalism, Soyinka overloads his chorus of Bacchantes and slaves with speeches which can easily seem overly portentous or pretentious. Whereas Soyinka's translation of the bacchae into a post-colonial piece is problematic, the conflict between god and man

remains, dramatically, a strong card. Soyinka's *The Bacchae of Euripides* has never, to my knowledge, had a second professional production.

Female rites

Another manifestation of maenadism had appeared during the late sixties, with the advent of feminism to Britain. It was to sound as many resonances of the Bacchae myth as had Flower Power or post-colonial liberationism. In 1968 in another National Theatre initiative, Joan Plowright had commissioned five women writers (primarily novelists) to write one-act plays for a 'Ladies Night'. Maureen Duffy's contribution, *Rites* (1969) [OUdb121], was, she says, 'not written as a version of the *Bacchae* and no attempt was made to make it conform to that play'. But it was, she says, Agave's story.[22] Duffy's maenads are observed by the audience, not liberated in a natural world but inside a sanctum - a ladies' lavatory - which, they assume, is as secure, as private, as 'away from looms and from shuttles' as the maenads' mountain glade on Cithaeron is for them. The chief attendant, Ada, is the equivalent of Agave in being the controller and organiser of the group of women who assemble at the lavatory to perform their morning 'rites' before dispersing to their several places or work. Ada articulates a desire to control her own life, independent of men, whom she despises. Hard, aggressive in the defence of her status and her domain, she has rejected affective relationships, and uses sex only as a way of exploiting men.

Like Agave's denial of the godhead of her sister's son, Ada's denial of life forces 'by translating sex and love into money and revenge' (Duffy, in Wandor (1983), 27) is seen to lead her to involvement in the most horrific and taboo destruction of life. In Ada's case, this is not the murder of her male child (for Euripides' Agave, an act, not only horrific and taboo, but self-destructive) but the killing of another woman, a 'sister'. The three ages of woman are characterised by three distinct sections of the chorus: young office girls, mothers (of boy children) and elderly housewives on a shopping outing. However, some of the characters are quite distinct and differentiated: Ada/Agave is the queen of the lavatory, with Meg her second-

in-command; Nellie and Dot are widows enjoying freedom from a life of serving their men; Norma is the spokeswoman for the young women starting out on their discoveries of life, work and sex. The 'rites' of the title are not just the *sparagmos* which occurs at the end of the play; the domestic and gendered 'rites' are what define and circumscribe the women's lives, and the performance of these rites demonstrates monthly, daily, hourly to the women how their lives are limited by the conventions and expectations which are societal constructs. In addition to the 'purging, washing-up, combing and making-up that occur in women's washrooms' and the 'ritualised ambience to the conversation', certain rituals of daily life are suggested and satirised.[23] There is Ada's reading of the Stock Market news and the 'Stars'; the chorusing of 'Now wash your hands please' as Nellie and Dot emerge fom the cubicles; and, capping Nellie's reminiscences about cleaning her husband's shoes, the rejection by the young women of Beeton-esque rituals of cooking, significantly transforming the cooking of a sheep's head into a travesty of fertility sacrifice procedure:

THIRD OFFICE GIRL:	Take one sheep's head, remove the eyes, wash well in salted water. Boil with an onion stuck with cloves for six hours, removing the scum from time to time.
FIRST OFFICE GIRL:	When tender remove from the flame.
THIRD OFFICE GIRL:	Separate the meat from the bones. Chop and add brains and peeled tongue.
NORMA:	Put in a clean basin and cover with the liquor. Leave to set on the window sill.
FIRST OFFICE GIRL:	Then remove to the bottom of the garden...
THIRD OFFICE GIRL:	Dig large hole and bury...
NORMA:	And wait to see what comes up next Spring.

(Duffy, 1983, 16-7)

Throughout the play, there is an implicit and occasionally explicit resentment of the constraints and threats imposed on women by a male-dominated society. For the older women, life on the pension does at least give a degree of freedom, and they have moved from the distasteful and embarrassing demands of being sexually active to a kind of neuter state - though one which is still seen by society as female gendered. The young women are ambivalent about sex; though prepared to barter it for marriages which would rescue them from unfulfilling jobs, they retain a romantic naivety about love. Ada has no such notions:

ADA:
Bastard men! Get a man, she says. I'll get him right where I want him. He thinks because I'm flat on my back he's got me but I've got him; caught, clenched as if I had my teeth in him....

(Duffy, 1983, 23)

This is a chilling prefiguring of a death of Pentheus: the hunter hunted. There are moments of increasing tension, of expectancy: when a boy 'toddler' (Dionysus doll) is brought in by his mother; when a young girl disappointed in love attempts suicide by slashing her wrists; when the women round menacingly on an old woman in a 'Knees up, Mother Brown' dance, directed by Ada, who threatens:

> One day you'll be old like her...Old Mother Brown that's who she is. That's how we all end up. *(There is an angry hiss.)*
>
> (Duffy, 1983, 24)

What intoxicates these maenads is not drink, drugs or violent physical activity (though there is dancing, to the chant of '[Men] ..we don't need them...'), but the sharing of strong emotion - anger, frustration, fear - with other women. Though the setting is far from Cithaeron, there are occasional linguistic reminders of the original: after the *sparagmos* of what is thought to be a male interloper, but turns out to be another woman, Ada further implicates all those present in disposing of the fragmented body in the newly installed incinerator - a device installed by men to consume women's blood. 'Listen to it roar. We'll feed it' she says, recalling Bromius, the Roaring One, who is also lion and bull.

Keyssar (1984, 119) sees this disposal coda as what makes Duffy's play something more interesting than just a feminist scream of anger:

> Male and female are not so easily distinguishable, one from another. The deeper, more significant cause of fury in women may not be men but a profound sense of powerlessness.

This begs the question, 'by whom is power held and with-held from women? by men alone?' The play also suggests a metaphor for the damage feminism was in danger of inflicting on itself by violent and inappropriate reaction.

Women beyond the pale

In Duffy's play, the bacchae are not seen in the context of a natural world, and their rites of robing and adornment are usual, accustomed, not marking them out from non-maenads. The

violence born of frustration and fear is not directed against a representative of civilisation - the *polis* - except insofar as it might be said that for these women, any man is symbolic of the oppression of society whose value systems and infrastructures are male-dictated. The neat inversion of man-who-looks-like-woman turned to woman-who-looks-like-man suggests an anxiety about aggressive feminist power-seeking which Caryl Churchill was later to investigate in *Top Girls* (1982), but it also touches on an atavistic fear the female has of losing her perceived femininity, and being confused with male. To be without sexual bargaining potential because old or non-female in appearance means loss of female power; to male observers, such a de-feminized female is an anomaly, and may, if she appears to have some power which does not depend solely on her sexual status, be threatening.[24] Thus, like the maenads who confuse Pentheus because they are not, as he supposed, simply serving the Stranger's or their own sexual gratification, the British feminists of the seventies seemed to threaten a male-orientated society because they rejected or lived 'outside' it.

Feminist consciousness raising did indeed make many women 'mad' - after the Angry Young Men of the late fifties came the Angry Women of the early seventies. As Keyssar (1984) and Goodman (1993) point out, in its early years, Feminist Theatre tended to be alternative theatre; the theatre of 'outside'. In the case of one group, Common Ground, this was literally so; the group was composed of women who had for some time been camping out at Greenham Common in protest against the housing there of American Cruise missiles. The Women's Peace movement was a hybrid out of CND and English feminism; the 'Greenham women' became a distinct sorority within this movement. By expressing protest in performance, Common Ground staked the Greenham Women's claim to a share in the rituals of Dionysus.

Their play *The Fence* (performed 1984) was put together through a process of collaboration and improvisation; non-realistic in style, it nevertheless incorporated snatches of 'realistic' dialogue, and scenes which mirrored its setting when it was performed (its second performance - the first was in a London church) just outside the Greenham fence. Here were recognisable echoes of the *Bacchae*; the women leave homes and domestic responsibilities in pursuit of a more pressing

cause, live wild, are subject to the elements, and devise certain rituals of everyday life, by which they challenge socially constructed boundaries and divisions. In scene 7, a group of women challenge a soldier's conception and expectations of them:

FIONA: What do you think of us?
SOLDIER: I think you're mad sitting around camp fires making weird noises and singing ... But it's a free country isn't it?
MAX: Is it?
SOLDIER: You couldn't do this in Russia?
TANYA: [...] They've done a good job on you.
Pause.
SOLDIER: What do you mean? Think I haven't got my own mind?
TANYA: What do you fear, soldier?
Pause.
SOLDIER: I fear you, women. I fear your eyes. They trouble me, you're weird. You destroy the natural order of things. (*Pause.*) My wife doesn't look the way you look.

(Common Ground, 1985, 121)

The sharp division between gender roles (male = warlike, female = peaceful) is being disrupted by the women in their avowed pursuit of peace, since they have aggressively to force their opponents to consider their own stand. The oppositions in the *Bacchae* of wise/foolish and personal/political are clearly also issues here.

In 1986, Caryl Churchill, working in collaboration with David Lan and actors of Joint Stock theatre company, took the *Bacchae* as a starting point for an exploration of the women/peace:men/violence polarisation which she felt many feminist plays (and polemic generally) seemed to propound. *A Mouthful of Birds* [OUdb116] (which coincidentally acronymises to A.M.O.B.) was an experimental piece in that it used music, dance and mime, together with scenes of realistic dialogue, to discuss the theme of possession. In her notes for the play, Churchill writes:

> I had been thinking ... about women and violence. Women have traditionally been seen as more peaceful than men, and that view has been politicised, particularly by women protesting against nuclear weapons. There is a danger of polarising men and women into what becomes again the traditional view that men are naturally more violent and so have no reason to change. It seems important to recognise women's capacity for violence and men's for peacefulness... The *Bacchae* is about a violent murder done by women; it is about the pleasure of physical power, the exhilaration of destruction, and finally a recognition of its horror...
>
> (1986, 5)

The play follows seven separate characters from 'before', to 'during' and 'after' a decisive moment when they are possessed and become other than how they normally are. The characters double as bacchae, Pentheus, Agave and Dionysus 1 and 2, and the scenes which relate to each character allow different aspects of the disruption of boundaries with which the *Bacchae* is concerned to be explored. 'Baron Sunday' shows a Trinidadian medium at work; 'Psychic Attack', a wife and mother whose mind is taken over by the persuasion of a spirit such that she murders her child; and 'Pig' is about a man who falls in love with a pig. The disruption of male/female boundaries is suggested in 'Baron Sunday', developed in the prison officers' dialogue in 'Dancing', and made explicit in the 'Herculine Barbin' section. Dance introduces and closes the play (Dionysus 1 appears in crimped wig and flounced petticoat at the start of the play, flitting through a partially broken-down box set of a house interior, like a breastless Minoan goddess), and mime or dance sections link the dialogue. Thus, in its form, the play challenges concepts of boundaries, and even, indeed, of divisions between genres.

The maenads of this play are mixed gender and race, but share a common vulnerability and are all susceptible to possession, for various, individualised reasons. Against the particulars of the individual scenes is set the communality of the group dance sequences, 'The Fruit Ballet' and 'Extreme Happiness', in which sensuous experiences - eating succulent fruit, bathing under a waterfall - are shown as a path to possession. The delight in physical experience then extends, at the end of the first half, to maenad experience:

> AGAVE: Why are my feet cut and blistered? I've been running all night.
> MARCIA *is possessed by a* Bacchant
> BACCHANT 1: Honey in my hair!
> YVONNE *is possessed by a* Bacchant
> BACCHANT 2: (*of the waterfall*) It's wine!
> LENA *is possessed by a* Bacchant
> BACCHANT 3: Salt and sweet. I can feel its heart throb!
> (1986, 49)

The section leading up to the death of Pentheus (a death which only the women in the cast enact, Dionysus 1 and 2 watching) is called 'Hot Summer', and carries the suggestion of the influence natural forces like weather have in raising tensions in a community. This may recall the earthquake in the original, and the inter-relation of human and natural worlds. The summer

heat intensifies the feelings of claustrophobia in the multiple-occupation house in this piece and Doreen /Agave attacks another woman after an escalating duel of noise. Her violence is turned verbally on a male fellow tenant, then channelled by her friend Susy into attempts at telekinesis. Success in this experiment exhilarates and excites the women, and leads into their attack on Pentheus. As Agave gathers the limbs together, the other bacchae disperse, returning to their former characters. This interpretation of *sparagmos* as a final resort for women maddened by feelings of repression or powerlessness is one which Churchill had incorporated in an earlier work, *Fen* (1983), much of the material for which was gathered by a process of interviewing and workshopping with fenland women. In *Fen*, a character recalls her grandmother saying:

> When times were bad they'd mutilate the cattle. Go out in the night and cut a sheep's throat or hamstring a horse or stab a cow with a fork. They didn't take the sheep, they didn't want the meat. She stabbed a lamb. She slashed a foal. 'What for?' I said. They felt quieter after that.
>
> (Scene 21)

In the modern setting of *Fen*, such repressed aggression and frustration are turned by one woman against her teenage step-daughter; only by causing pain can she assert her own existence. In *A Mouthful of Birds*, however, violence as a form of extreme physical activity is recognised as enjoyable, though this is a concept which can only be acceptable to the observers when the normal boundaries have been seen to be transgressed while the actor is out of her 'normal' mind, possessed. As a social community, the audience cannot condone violence against human beings but it can recognise that all humans - female and male - have the capacity not just to be violent, but to enjoy being so.

Agave's Story

Agave's entrance in the *Bacchae* marks the beginning of the end; her triumph, realisation, grief and subsequent acknowledgement of the inevitability of the will of the gods constitute the exodos, and apart from a rather perfunctory and familiar chorus tag, she has almost the last words in the play. Different aspects of her particular tragedy have appealed to modern playwrights, so there is a range of ways that its interpretation has taken in recent versions.

It may be helpful first to mark the various movements of Agave's appearance, since they are movements which do not simply follow the verse changes or assignations.

Section A: 1168-83: Agave's entry in triumph and her dialogue with the Bacchants. Of particular note is the mention of the 'young lion', of Cithaeron (where Actaeon was torn to pieces, too), and of 'Cadmus's children'.

Section B: 1184-99: The antistrophe in chorus and response dialogue. Agave demands to be praised; the use of the word '*perissan*' - 'special/extraordinary' - has dangerous implications in the play, as of course, does *deinos*.

Section C: 1200-15: At the chorus's invitation, Agave reveals the 'lion's head' and gloats over the achievements of the daughters of Cadmus, who don't need men's weapons, but use their bare hands to kill.

Section D: 1216-62: Cadmus's entry with Pentheus's body. A dialogue between dejection and elation. Again (1233-43), Agave demands praise for acting like a man. In 1251-8 she chaffs Cadmus for his grumpiness and wishes her son were as much of a man (a successful hunter, a victor) as she is.

Section E: 1263-1300 : The 'psychotherapy' section; during the stichomythia section, Cadmus brings his daughter back to her senses and forces her to recognise Pentheus's head, and her own part in the killing by asking her about her own history and the family's previous experience of Cithaeron.

Section F: 1300: The first lacuna. Seaford (250) convincingly argues for this being the point at which Agave re-assembles the body, with some kind of lament - he suggests a 'horrifying' and 'unrestrained (female)' one.

Section G: 1301-29: Agave's question about blame sparks off Cadmus's self-pity and complaints about his children. The second lacuna at 1329 is tantalising; does Agave achieve a rapprochement with him here, perhaps, since, after Dionysus's speech at 1329-43 and Cadmus's objections, Agave takes charge in the farewell scene, after Cadmus's continued complaints during 1351-62?

Section H: 1350-87. The dialogue of parting. If, as would be theatrically effective, Dionysus exits after 1351, and 1377-8 is allotted to Cadmus, there is still a feeling of recrimination in his response, with his flinging the *deinos* of Agave's line 1374 back at her in 1377 (*deina*). Agave's final speech acknowledges continuation of the cult of Dionysus, but also the impossibility for her or her sisters of enjoying the benefits of Bacchism, or of continuing to live in Thebes, where the nearness of Cithaeron will be a constant reproach and source of horror.

Agave's Triumph (Sections A,B,C,D)

This section is notable in Euripides for Agave's use of images of success in male activities: hunting, of course, but the implication of valour in fighting may also be suggested by *taristeia* ('prize for courage') at line 1239. Both in her speech to the Chorus at (C) and in her claims to her father's praise in (D), she manifests her out-of-proper-mindness by boasting of her masculine achievements, and at 1205-8, of doing better with her bare hands than the famous Thessalian spearmen might even do with their weapons. The women, she says, have found a greater calling than looms and shuttles (1236) and vindicate their rejection of women's work by surpassing (not just equalling) men. They have brought down, not the rabbits and small animals usually hunted by maenads, but a young lion (with all the Homeric associations with male warrior courage that that beast implies). The implicit dissatisfaction with women's roles that Agave's exultation conveys is perhaps intended for Euripides' audience as an indicator of her own particular sickness of mind - an individual sickness which Dionysus encourages to grow and spread to grotesque proportions, infecting all the women of Thebes. For recent playwrights, her dissatisfaction with gender role and her contempt for men in general and her son in particular present interesting potential for development as a feminist sense of frustration and a (not necessarily feminist) antagonism to certain men or male roles.

It may also seem to modern readers that, while Agave craves the attention and praise of her father and speaks slightingly of her son, she is significantly distant about his father, her husband (1274-6). Whereas to a Greek audience the 1273-6 section of the stichomythic exchange may

just have indicated the returning order of Agave's mind, in this century her economy and factual precision could be interpreted as signalling bad memories. John Bowen finds the unseen, subtextual relationship between mother and son particularly interesting; he imagines an Echion 'rough, violent ... an absolute king, who gets one son on his wife, and no healthy children thereafter'. He suggests the polarised world which takes the six-year-old boy to be trained as king-to-be, leaving Agave deprived of a son and Pentheus of a mother, and he hypothesises about the boy's resentment and growing hatred of his father: 'Pentheus longs for his mother - lusts after her, indeed: Oedipus may not have had an Oedipus-complex, but Pentheus certainly does' (1969, 16-7). Bowen's Agave is confronted, at Pentheus's accession, with a stranger who can have no real role for her in his political life, and cannot acknowledge his emotional, child-like need for her in his adulthood. It is this emotional isolation and lack of real role that drive Bowen's Agave to Bacchism.

Duffy's 'Agave', Ada, voices most strongly for the women in her play the antagonism felt towards men; an antagonism only able to be expressed in a private, close, and female environment. Ada does have a role; indeed, it is established by her second speech that she is hoping for promotion. Moreover, she prides herself on knowing about the male world of the Stock Market:

ADA:

> It's all on the back pages of the paper, just before the sport, if you know where to look. They think we don't read that far.
>
> (Duffy, 1983, 14)

As we learn later, what Ada is marketing is herself; she aggressively and cynically sells sex as a kind of revenge:

> ADA:
> They swoon and cry and die in my arms and come back for more. "Screw me," I whisper and they pound and pant in their pitiful climaxes they think so earth-shaking. "That was a good one", they say and then I make them pay for it .
>
> (Duffy, 1983, 23)

What excites Ada is having power - specifically, power over men. It is for her to dictate whether, at the suspicion of an attempted suicide, a policeman might be allowed into the sanctum, and it is she who, when the 'boy' is brought in, takes off his trousers and pants to expose him to the watching women. Ada instigates the dance round the old woman, and

orchestrates the killing of the suspected intruder: 'We'll teach you to come spying'. But her moment of triumph does not elevate the victim, in the way that Agave's does, into a heroic and worthy opponent. 'Look at it!' she cries 'I've seen prettier in the butcher's shop. Animals! Bastard men'. Though, equating to Agave's disdain for her son's lack of 'manliness', she concurs in the general agreement that 'All men are babies', it is not in her interest in terms of her own self-esteem to belittle her enemies. The greater men's dangerousness, the greater her skill and satisfaction in overcoming them.

In *A Mouthful of Birds*, as in *Rites*, suppressed frustration with gender roles leads to violence. However, in Churchill's play, possession (as in the *Bacchae*) is a much more important element than in *Rites*. Also, while the area of transexuality is a major concern (in 'Herculine Barbin', 'Dancing', and also the cross-dressing of Pentheus, and the costuming of male characters in female petticoats), contempt for 'unmanly men', translated in *Rites* into Ada's contempt for men who need women for sex, is not an important issue. Derek, the character who later becomes the hermaphrodite Herculine Barbin, introduces the idea of 'not being a man', but from a male viewpoint. In a scene in which the male actors play characters in a gym, lifting weights while discussing unemployment, Derek says of his father: 'He thought he wasn't a man without a job' (scene 3).

In 'Psychic Attack', Lena, who initially cannot bring herself to skin a rabbit but relies on her husband to do it, is reviled by her spirit voice and provoked into violence by the spirit's insistence that she is worthless, useless, because she tolerates her husband. The spirit's revolting and aggressive picture of the man -

> His hair smells. His eyes have got yellow in the corners. His ears have got hairs on. His nose has got big pores and the nostrils are too big and full of hair and snot and he snores and snorts. His teeth are yellow. His tongue's yellow. His mouth tastes of shit because it's directly connected to his arsehole (Part Two, section 9, 26)

- is designed to drive her to desperation, and into a conviction that she must kill her baby by this man in order to free herself of him. She has no moment of triumph, nor is she unaware of what she is doing. However, in the final section of the play, when each of the main characters recaps

on his or her experiences, Lena, now working as a carer for old people, recalls the joy of the kill: 'I remember I enjoyed doing it. It's nice to make someone alive and it's nice to make someone dead. Either way.' (Part Three, section 25, 70)

Agave's Grief (E, F, G)

The point of recognition (1279-85) in Euripides could hardly be bettered in terms of dramatic irony served by linguistic economy - though subsequent versions which do not cling to the close translation tend to expand for particular emphasis. (It is, of course, difficult to translate the force of Pentheus's name, unless one re-names him 'Sorrow'.) Tiresias's ominous forebodings at 367: *Pentheus d' hopōs me penthos eisoisei domois* - 'May Pentheus not bring grief to your house', are first echoed by Cadmus at 1244: ('grief not to be measured'), but the word is reserved for its greatest impact at line 1284. At 1260, Cadmus warns of a 'terrible sorrow/grief' (*algos deinon*), and when Agave does see clearly at line 1282, she sees *megiston algos*, only at line 1284 bursting out with '*ouk alla Pentheōs he talain ekhō kara*' ('No, but, wretched, I have the head of Pentheus'). In this way, Pentheus is made to embody all sources of sorrow for the suffering Agave, who is particularised and isolated by her relationship to her victim, but also relieved of sole guilt by her membership of the Cadmeian family. When she asks where Pentheus died, Cadmus eliptically responds with a reminder of her nephew Actaeon's guilt and death, and at lines 1294-5, asserts that she and the whole land were rendered mad. So, Agave concludes by seeing the will and vindictiveness of Dionysus behind her unwitting crime.

In *Rites*, Ada, like Agave, comes late to recognition of her terrible mistake:

> NORMA: *(slowly standing up)* Christ! It was a woman!
> NELLIE: Oh my gawd!
> ADA: That?
> NORMA: Don't you think I know. It was a bloody woman.
> ADA: (*going over she bends down and examines the figure. Then she straightens up)* She shouldn't have done it.
> FIRST OFFICE GIRL: I want to cry.
> ADA: She shouldn't have done it. How could we tell; the mouth, the eyes...?
> (Duffy, 1983, 24)

Since Ada's pending promotion would be jeopardised by the discovery of this crime, in addition to blaming the victim for appearing to be a man, she involves all those present in concealing the evidence and destroying the bloody remains in the incinerator: 'Ash is only ash; sift it fine enough and who can tell'. Duffy allows Ada no remorse, no grief, only blame for a victim who has put herself (as Ada sees it) into a position of vulnerability. But Ada is not just visiting from Thebes; she inhabits Cithaeron. Her aspiration to be seen as strong as, and more capable than, a man is not a passing madness but a habit of mind acquired by experience of an antagonistic and exploitative male world.

The Disorderly Women follows the plot and words of Euripides more closely, but because he eliminates Cadmus (replacing him with a respected tutor-turned-administrator, but not a relative of the royal family), the mother-son relationship is sharpened. The moment of recognition is led up to very gradually, with the Senior Secretary concentrating Agave's attention on the physical reality of his own hand: 'The skin stretched over the flesh /That covers the bone'. The delay in Agave's clear-sighted look at Pentheus's head is made longer than the eight lines (1277-84) in Euripides:

> SENIOR SECRETARY. And what are you carrying, Majesty,
> Between your hands?
> PPS. That's enough.
> SENIOR SECRETARY. What are you carrying there?
> AGAVE *is frightened, and will not look.*
> AGAVE. A lion's head. We caught a lion on the mountain.
> *She turns to the* WOMEN *for corroboration.*
> We caught a young lion on the mountain. You remember that.
> Somebody tell him I have a lion's head in my hands.
> SENIOR SECRETARY. Look directly at it.
> AGAVE. (*to* WOMEN) Tell him what I am holding in my hands.
> SENIOR SECRETARY. Just look. Look closely.
> Take all the time you need.
>
> AGAVE *looks. Silence.*
> AGAVE *gives long cry.*
>
> Is it a lion's head still?
> AGAVE. No! No! Oh, no, no!
> I see a grief I hold in my hands.
> I see the greatest grief a mother knows
> Between my hands. It is my son's head.
>
> (Bowen, 1969, 89)

The preceding passage, with its concentration on the construction of human hands from bone, muscle, veins, flesh, fat, has sensitised the audience to the head/hands juxtaposition. The idea of the creative/destructive hands (which, of course, exemplifies the creative/destructive nature of Dionysus) carries on with Agave's lament:

> Upon these hands with which I once nursed him,
> There is now his blood [...]
> How with these guilty hands may I touch his body?
> How can I, cursed with his blood, prepare him for burial?
> [...] And who else will do it?
>
> *She nurses the head as if it were a baby.*
>
> No, child. No hands can give you proper care
> Unless my own hands undo my own work.
>
> (Bowen, 1969, 90)

John Bowen's Agave assumes a 'proper' role, as Euripides' audience would have seen it, in laying out as decently as she can, though with her own transgressing hands, the body of her male relative. But she is also given Cadmus's comments about Pentheus's protection of his city: 'here in Thebes you ran an orderly city'; and hypothesises (charitably) about Pentheus's probable reaction to and treatment of 'A woman mad with drugs who killed her son'. Through the eyes of this Agave, Pentheus is seen as the Apollonian ruler whose own flesh and blood, not his arrogance or *hubris* to the god, destroyed him.

Agave's tragedy is not simply that she kills her son, but that she lives on with the knowledge of that crime; a woman who, in Athenian terms, has, by killing her sole male offspring, self-destructed. No longer wife or mother, she has only the dubious status of being a daughter of the House of Cadmus. She can take no pride or comfort in her *oikos*, but faces a life of exile from the protected and known life 'within the doors'. Soyinka's answer was to reverse the ending from hollow laughter of Dionysiac destruction to the rapture of a new communion rite, arrived at through sacrifice. It is Agave, in Soyinka's version, who is first to drink from the jets of wine spurting from Pentheus's head, for it is she who has asserted a community of suffering with her final line in reponse to Kadmos's 'why us?': 'Why not?', she says, echoing the Herdsman's

response to the same question from the Slave Leader at the start of the play. She is not important as mother but as first celebrant of the new 'communion rite'.[25]

Churchill, writing in a more hard-nosed decade, recognises the tragic potential in the horror of living with the results of one's actions, whether those actions happen by deliberate choice or by the visitation of the god. In their last brief monologues, the seven characters reflect on the changes which they have undergone. Lena, who has murdered her baby, says: 'That power is what I like best in the world. The struggle is every day not to use it'. Other characters have been liberated or found new strength through their experience of possession; some have become isolated, or chosen a life alone (Paul, Marcia). For Doreen/Agave, who, at the end of the killing of Pentheus had asserted that she would stay on Cithaeron ('There's nothing for me there. There never was. I'm staying'), the great horror is having to return to the semblance of a 'normal' life ('I carry on my work as a secretary') when her head is 'filled with horrible images... it seems my mouth is full of birds ..their feathers, their blood and broken bones are choking me'.

The *Bacchae* and recent developments in English theatre

This chapter does not attempt to provide a full performance history of the *Bacchae* in England, so no account is given of productions of 'straight' translations, or of Greek language performances.[26] The versions singled out for particular attention represent, I suggest, important points in the interface of social history and theatre development. They range in fidelity to original from Soyinka's (which is indeed called *The 'Bacchae' of Euripides*, and uses lines from both Murray's and Arrowsmith's translations), through Bowen's *The Disorderly Women*, which follows the narrative line and with similar characters to Euripides'; to the works of the women playwrights, Duffy, Churchill, and the Greenham Common collective.

Duffy and Churchill declare an interest in the themes of the *Bacchae*, but disclaim any attempt to reproduce or improve on Euripides' work; their plays are on the very verge of what, in the introductory chapter, was described, after Dryden, as 'imitation'. The two male writers produced

plays which set the narrative of destructive 'female' (or alien, or 'other') power within a recognisable social and male-orientated world, so that at the end of the works, as in Euripides' play, the audience is left with a message about how to avoid tragedy by accepting and assimilating the 'other' into the 'us' of the state. By contrast, both female playwrights leave out this social perspective, and attempt no resolution, no message about assimilating or defusing the frightening power of the 'other'; they simply show that it exists. In addition, for Churchill, Dionysian ambiguity (male/female, joy/fear, dancing/killing) dictates the very form she chooses, since her play keeps the audience uncertain by its mixture of dance, mime and realistic narrative, and by its juxtaposition of the shocking and taboo with the comic.

The creation of the Greenham Common play, *The Fence* (whose writers may have known nothing at all about the *Bacchae*[27]) could be seen as exemplifying rather than describing the conflict of Pentheus and Dionysus. In itself perhaps no great work of literature, it reflected developments in theatre; since the early seventies, ad hoc collectives - often minority or all-women groups - had been producing plays for particular occasions or specific ends. Their performances were eclectic in style, utilising non-linear, episodic narratives, mixed media, and the influences of physical theatre and agit-prop. It was from such *thiasoi* that longer-term theatre companies such as Monstrous Regiment, Joint Stock and Gay Sweatshop were established.[28] If the *Bacchae*'s themes were not overtly dealt with in their work, they had certainly been recognised and internalised, and mid-century English mainstream theatre, having encountered the subversive power of such *thiasoi*, or of individual followers of Dionysus, was to experience a kind of *sparagmos*.

NOTES

1 In Shaffer's *The Royal Hunt of the Sun* (1964), Atahuallpa is not so much a Dionysus-figure in his control of the action (indeed, for his conquistador murderer, Pizarro, he becomes a Christ-figure), but in his unsettling self-assurance as god-man, and in his 'otherness' from his antagonist's culture. In his programme note for the National Theatre production (1964), Shaffer wrote: 'I suppose what is most distressing for me in reading history is the way man constantly trivialises the immensity of his experience: the way, for example, he canalises the greatness of his spiritual awareness into the second-rate formula of a church - any church. To me, the greatest tragic failure in history is man's apparent need to mark the intensity of his reaction to life by joining a band; for a band, to give itself definition, must find a rival or an enemy.'

In *Equus* (1973) and *Amadeus* (1979), Dysart and Salieri, observers of the power of an incomprehensible god, recognise their own professional destruction or discreditation at the hands of that god through their interaction with his chosen devotee (respectively, Alan Strang and Mozart). Needless to say, the god Salieri worships is neither a Christian nor a Judaic one, but the source of divine musical inspiration. As a supreme irony, Shaffer makes Dysart an alleged worshipper of things Ancient Greek, an irony Dysart himself verbalises: 'I put away my books on the cultural shelf, close up the Kodachrome snaps of Mount Olympus, touch my reproduction statue of Dionysus for luck - and go off to hospital to treat him [Strang] for insanity.' (Act II, sc.25)

2 David Rudkin's *Afore Night Come* (1960) culminates in the ritual murder of a vagrant in a Worcestershire pear orchard, and in *The Sons of Light* (1976) the first half ends with the description of an executional *sparagmos.*

3 Croally (1994, 7): '... the most spectacular and subversive Dionysiac behaviour seems to have been perpetrated by women. Perhaps, then, we should not be surprised by the number of transgressive and dangerous women in tragedy.'

4 See Clark (1989, rep. 1993, 33): 'Attic fifth-century pottery had numerous maenad scenes, but that may be a decorative not a social trend: the characteristic maenad pose (head thrown back, arm outstretched with thyrsus, knee lifted to dance or run) produces interesting tensions of body and drapery, especially when juxtaposed with satyrs.'

5 See Boardman (1964), plates 84 (Athenian black-figure *amphora*, c.540 B.C.) and 96 (Athenian red-figure cup from Orvieto, c.490 B.C.), and Simon (1982), plates 1 (Athenian red-figure vase, c.470) and 6.1 (Athenian red-figure vase, c.460). Seaford (1994), 7.e, discusses the 5th-century Attic 'Lenäensvasen'.

6 Dodds (xxviii), notes that unless the *Hydrophoroi* was a version of the Semele story, Sophocles does not appear to have dealt with the Dionysus-in-Thebes theme, but that after Euripides' play, there were more bacchic plays still to come. Seaford, however, (26 n.9), includes a queried *Bakchai* in his attributions to Sophocles. See also March (1989), where previous literary sources are cited as evidence in support of an argument of innovative plot changes by Euripides in his play.

7 Winkler, in Winkler and Zeitlin (1990), 20-62.

8 See Goldhill, in Winkler & Zeitlin (1990), 127, on the extent to which the *polis* appropriated the tragic festival: 'It is the *interplay between norm and transgression* enacted in the tragic festival that makes it a Dionysiac occasion'.

9 Or suspicion of these cults; see Seaford (1997), 51-2.

10 See Herodotus, *The Histories*, II. 144 (trs. de Selincourt, (rev. Marincola 1996)), 139: 'Horus is the Apollo, Osiris the Dionysus, of the Greeks', and (II. 42): 'the only two [gods] to be universally worshipped are Isis and Osiris, who, they say, is Dionysus' (101). Herodotus also writes (II. 59) of the vast temple at Busiris, 'dedicated to Isis, the Egyptian equivalent of Demeter' (108).

11 Aristotle, *On the Generation of Animals*, trs. A.L. Peck, in Lefkowitz & Fant (1982), 83-4: 'the female, in fact, is female on account of inability of a sort'. See, also, Clark (1993), 4-9, and Pomeroy (1975, rep. 1994), 84-7.

12 Pomeroy (1975, rep. 1994), 78.

13 Homer's formulaic '...they gave themselves up to the pleasures of dancing and the delights of song' (*Odyssey*, trs. Rieu, 1946, 36 & 284) might imply the suitors' decadence, but at Alcinous's palace, the flower of Phaeacian youth regale Odysseus with a dancing display (129), and two of Alcinous's sons are singled out by their father, with justifiable pride, to perform their speciality act, a ball dance (132). See also Winkler (1990, 55-6) on dancing as a form of drill. He stresses the youth of the dancers, and certainly Odysseus is not invited to join in the Phaeacian dance, though he is invited to participate in the games. (Shakespeare, in what seems a clear case of adaptation of the Phaeacian episode, has his 'Odysseus', Pericles, compete and excel in both games and dancing, thus winning the hand of Thaïsa.) However, Murray (1993, 212-3), albeit in a section on the conduct of the symposion, quotes Herodotus VI. 126-30 on Hippokleides' unseemly dancing losing him the hand of Kleisthenes' daughter.

14 The nature of the Dionysus character has been much discussed. The legacy of nineteenth-century British Christianity was to render the character highly suspect; a shaman with pretensions, an exarchos with attitude. Jan Kott (1974) takes a more syncretist or eclectic view, and fearlessly gathers Christian symbols, rituals and sectarian peculiarities to illustrate the absence of any problem in discussing a character who is simultaneously god and man, authoritative and subversively destructive.

15 See Goldhill's (1986) discussion of the role of chorus (Chapters 6 and 11) and Winkler (in Winkler & Zeitlin, 1990). Doing chorus service was perhaps a mixture of civic duty, education and pleasurable experience, as are some modern late-adolescent training/peer-group bonding/rite of passage experiences.

16 Though Zeitlin (1990) is primarily concerned with the experience of actors and audience rather than chorus, and, by extension, with the 'feminine' nature of tragedy.

17 Kott (1974), 201-2. With reference to evangelical black churches and 'Negro spirituals' he says: 'God is praised in rhythms that are the sign and symbols of sex.'

18 For example, *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead* (Tom Stoppard, 1967), and Charles Marowitz's versions of *Hamlet*, *Julius Caesar* and *The Shrew*; *Lear* (Edward Bond, 1971), and *MacBird!* (Barbara Carson, 1976).

19 See Hartigan (1995), 81-9 for an account of performances of the *Bacchae* in the United States 1960-70, and 84-5 on the *Dionysus in '69* [OUdb128] production.

20 Bowen (1969), 7 & 9.

21 Aston & Savona (1991, 51) explain this useful distinction between *haupttext*, the dramatic text itself, and *nebentext*, the subsidiary text containing stage directions, authorial comments and notes.

22 Duffy (1969), 26-7, Afterword, written in 1983.

23 Keyssar (1984), 119.

24 Hence, through the history of male societies, the marginalisation of women with non-sexual power: cunning women, women mystics, women with a 'masculine' mind. The construct of the 'witch' serves this need to marginalise, and like Pentheus, the witchfinders assume and expect sexual deviation or excess from witches, since they do not conform to other gender norms. The witch's non-conformity has been used in theatre as a metaphor for political or social deviance (for example, in Arthur Miller's *The Crucible* (1953) or Churchill's *Vinegar Tom* (1976)), but the witch as expression of female power outside social limits is being reclaimed by feminist playwrights (e.g., *Byrthrite* (1987) by Sarah Daniels).

25 Contrast Verrall's Edwardian sympathies, quoted by Oranje (1984, 8), for the 'finest character in the play' (Pentheus): 'Arrogant he is, and implusive, but most would rather lie beside his mangled body at the end than share the thoughts of the believers who stand around it.'

26 Such a history has yet to be written. It would register, in Britain alone, readings of English translations as different as the 1974 Actors' Company production [Oudb117], Meckler's 1988 production [OUdb113] with Shared Experience, the 1993 Opera Factory production [OUdb111], and Kaboodle's 1996 [OUdb110] touring production.

27 It is not inappropriate to find such echoes of ancient texts or ideas in subsequent work whose authors may be unaware of their debt. In the *International Journal of the Classical Tradition*, vol. 4, no.1, summer 1997, 23-36, Richard Jenkyns traces 'the effect upon Dante of features of classical literature and its history about which he was himself unaware' (23).

28 See Goodman (1993), 38-61 on the foundation of feminist theatres from the late sixties, on working methods in feminist theatres, and 88-94 in particular for Churchill's collaboration with Monstrous Regiment and Joint Stock.

CHAPTER 3

MONSTROUS WOMAN: *MEDEA*

'*Medea* is an excessive play, even for Euripides'[1]

Perhaps it is the element of excess which makes the *Medea* of Euripides popular with a late twentieth-century audience - or at least, with late twentieth-century *choregoi*. The excess is not in the staging; apart from Medea's final exit in her dragon chariot, the play requires minimal set or effects; it is a self-contained narrative needing only the briefest of explanatory programme notes; it provides a vehicle for a star actress, and if the chorus is attenuated, as it usually is, to three, two or one, the cast list need be no more than nine, including two children to play Jason's sons. The excess is in the passion, in the extremity of Medea's revenge, and in her superhuman status.

It might seem a paradox that such a play, about such a figure, should be popular in English theatres. Critics of 'the English style' in acting would say that English actors are too cerebral to conjure up the necessary passion for Medea.[2] Indeed, until the last three decades there was little recognition on English stages of resonances for English or British audiences in Medea's double colonisation (through gender and ethnicity). McDonald produces nearly two pages of her résumé of exciting and innovatory recreations of *Medea* before mentioning an English production, and then, it is a production of a straightforward English translation, rather than a version of the story.[3] However, this chapter will propose that Medea's excessive passion is not the sole characterising aspect of the role; she is also a professional actress (in that her existence depends on her ability to manipulate others' emotions); a show-woman par excellence, and an emblem of the dangerous and glamorous power of the alien world of theatre. For Euripides' audience, of course, the concept of 'actress' would have been unknown, and Medea's use of the

art of deceiving could not have been described in that way; it would have been perceived only as a marrying of different aspects of her 'otherness': she was foreign, a woman, clever, and part-immortal. English productions of the play in the latter part of this century, it will be suggested, have presented the psychological realism of the character by referring implicitly to the identity of the woman playing the role; so the identity of the actress - both the 'actress' as professional, and the actress as a private individual - becomes important in its own right. Study of the expression of what seems a peculiarly English desire, both to make Medea credible by scaling her down from operatic grandeur to psychological realism, *and* to retain her star quality, is, in part, the purpose of this chapter.

Variations on the theme

A modern actress might well feel that Medea is so large a character that her story deserves a trilogy. Though the play is usually played as a single work, the actress would be tantalised by the knowledge that Euripides himself wrote two other Medea plays; a *Peliades* (455 B.C.) and an *Aegeus.* Sophocles seems to have chosen the Colchis rather than the Corinth episode for his third Medea play (*Women of Kolchis, The Root-Cutters, Aigeus),* but other poets also used the Corinth story.[4] Whereas, in any annual offering in the Dionysia, the fifth-century Athenian playwright would seek to display his virtuosity in characterisation by giving the protagonist three very different tragic roles to play, in addition to a satyr play lead, modern English theatre is accustomed to the idea of playing sequentially any trilogy or series of plays about one figure. It allows the lead actors to display *their* virtuosity in playing across an age span, and showing the development of character. (This is no new idea, but it is one which the late twentieth-century sequential playing of the history tetralogies of Shakespeare has reintroduced and validated.)[5]

Surveys of the performance history of the play show how 'translators' of the play over the centuries have adapted or expanded on the original, as if to make the piece large enough to allow Medea's character expansion room, or to provide a form which allows non-realistic, bravura performance of the role.[6] McDonald (in Clauss & Johnston, 1997, 297) rightly describes Medea

as a 'Diva', and indeed, there have been numerous opera versions (from Charpentier's 1693 version to Mikos Theodorakis's in 1991). Opera preserves the mix of music, song, recitative, choreography and spectacle which Greek tragedy is imagined to have combined, and gives scope for a female singer to display technical virtuosity and dramatic skill.

Two film versions of the seventies, Pasolini's *Medea* (1970) [OUdb182] and Jules Dassin's *A Dream of Passion* (1978) [OUdb181], showed their directors' desire to body out or fill in Medea's motives and show a context for them in the chosen setting of the film. That Pasolini cast Maria Callas as a non-singing (apart from a lullaby to her children before the murder), almost non-speaking Medea was significant; the audience brought to the viewing their awareness of Callas's Diva reputation, and of her past triumph in the role of Medea in Cherubini's opera, *Médée*, in 1959 at Covent Garden, and were therefore conscious of the disempowerment implied in a near legendary singer being denied the use of her singing voice.[7] In *A Dream of Passion*, Dassin cast Melina Mercouri (whom he had directed in his 1961 *Phaedra*) as an actress playing the role of Medea, and Ellen Burstyn as Brenda Collins, a modern Medea, who murdered her children on Father's Day to revenge herself on her husband. In order to explore the process of recreating passion in art, Dassin intercut scenes and shots of the star rehearsing and performing *Medea* with scenes in which the two women met, or in which Brenda's actions were recalled in flashback.[8] For Herbert Golder, the success of this film in realising 'the elemental and transcendental nature of Medea's passion' was enough to convince him that: 'If Aeschylus, Sophocles and Euripides were alive today they would be filmmakers ... (Just as they might have been opera composers had they lived in the last century)'.[9]

Film can indeed provide the *Gesamstkunstwerk* form some directors of Greek tragedy seek, but other versions of this play have used and exploited those elements of live theatre which might to some eyes seem to limit it: its requirement of audience response; reliance on the conventions of staging, and its ephemeral nature - which makes each performance, even in a long run, unique. In 1972, Andrei Serban produced at La Mama Theatre a version of *Medea* which was to become part of his *An Ancient Trilogy* [OUdb95]. In line with Eastern European experimental theatre

practice, the production continued to be worked on and refined over many years, and it came to Britain in 1992. The production used sound-language and vocal noise instead of a Greek, English or Romanian text, and the different possibilities of staging - promenade, corridor space, open stage - were exploited in order to involve the audience physically and emotionally in the plays. So, in the *Medea,* the audience was seated in rows on opposite sides of a long, narrow playing space, and the dialogues between Medea and Jason were rendered rather as a tennis match, the angry words flying back and forth across the space dividing them.

Such deliberate exploitation of the potential of live theatre was seen, using very different cultural conventions, in Yukio Ninagawa's Toho Theatre production of *Medea* [OUdb177], seen in Britain at an open-air venue at the Edinburgh Festival in 1986 (and subsequently at the National Theatre in 1987). This all-male, Japanese language production made use of Kabuki dance tradition in choreography for the chorus of sixteen, and, in the outdoor setting of the courtyard of the Old College of Edinburgh University, effected a spectacular *coup de théâtre* for Medea's flight, with a golden dragon-drawn chariot appearing high above the audience in the night sky. This was theatrical spectacle indeed.[10]

The response of mainstream English theatre to the play is less 'operatic', less spectacular, and in general, more inclined to present a reading of an accepted translated text of Euripides' play than to experiment with versions based on the Medea story. (It is perhaps significant that Tony Harrison's 1985 libretto, *Medea: A Sex-War Opera* [OUdb180] in which the myth of Medea was put in tandem with the myth of Herakles, and the whole piece staged in the context of a modern media circus, was commissioned for the New York Opera company.) However, even in the single, one-and-a-half-hour play of Euripides, the role of Medea is clearly such a great opportunity for an actress that it continues to be produced in mainstream theatre with well-known box-office attractions like Madhur Jaffrey, Eileen Atkins and Diana Rigg. Actresses in English theatre in the past three decades have inherited both the 'English classical tradition' *and* developments in the sixties which put value on performance techniques rather than on fidelity to a notion of serving the texts. In spite of a new awareness of the potential of stylised or 'ritual'

approaches, psychological realism in characterisation ('realistic acting') continued to be an ultimate aim or test of an actor.

Acting Medea

The actor contemplating playing Euripides' Medea finds at least four kinds of 'otherness' in her: she is a woman, foreign, clever, and part-immortal. From the conjunction of these attributes, I would suggest, comes a fifth 'otherness' which sets her apart from the ordinary Greek citizen: she is a woman who is also an actor. In terms of the parameters of this study, Medea clearly does have considerable power, and uses it. Paradoxically, her power arises precisely from those attributes which, making her 'other' from the Greek audience watching her in 431, might have been supposed (by them) to disadvantage her, since they render her isolated and vulnerable. The latter part of this chapter analyses ways in which modern English productions have treated some or all of Medea's attributes of otherness, which attributes I here deal with in turn, signalling issues on which directors have to make decisions.

1) Medea the woman

Whether it was Euripides' own plot innovation that his Medea herself kills her sons is an issue vigorously pursued. Kovacs says: 'The evidence does not permit us to say with certainty whether the death of the children by Medea's deliberate act was an innovation of Euripides', but Knox, discussing Euripides' refashioning of the old stories, shows the playwright's choice of this denouement as being consistent with his desire to surprise or to shock.[11] Euripides' Medea is, Knox points out, not the witch of myth, although, like other women in Athenian drama, she is a *pharmakis*, one who knows about drugs. Though she invokes her immortal ancestry, this Medea is, until she implements her revenge, mere mortal woman, marginalised already by her foreignness, and now further isolated by her rejection by the man who might be expected to give her some status and protection. However, as a serial killer who literally rises above the laws and reach of men, she becomes, indeed, inhuman, a monstrous woman - though to designate her a 'monster', as Jason does - although it is a title she accepts - may be to reduce her to a two-

dimensional figure. There is a fascination about the character because she hovers between the realistically motivated human and what one might term the 'heroically'- proportioned villainess.[12]

Although, at her first entry, Medea is presented a mere woman and neither a witch nor an immortal, she is quite clearly possessed of great power. The nurse's dark murmurings about Medea's terrible temper and her fierce nature, punctuated by Medea's off-stage laments, prepare the audience and the chorus for a distraught, maniacal fury. But when she eventually makes her entrance, Medea behaves, initially, as if she has simply responded to a call for a press statement: 'Women of Corinth, I have come out of the house lest you should find fault with me' (214-5).[13] She proceeds to put her case - emotionally, but not without reason or control. It is, arguably, the first example of Medea's ability to manipulate her hearers in order to gain their sympathy or compliance: her first appearance as 'actress'. 'Thus', Barlow points out, 'does Medea begin - quietly, tentatively, not boldly but reaching out to draw the Chorus into her confidence'.[14] It is the first of a series of staged seductions. With Creon, with Aegeus, and finally with Jason, she is to use what an Athenian audience would probably describe as a woman's weapon; a protestation of weakness in order, deceitfully, to disarm one's enemy.

Medea's first speech to the chorus gives the indication that, for all her appeals to assumed sorority with the Corinthian women, this is no ordinary woman. Her opening lines relate to her anxiety about what the public may think or say of her - which, if we are to believe Thucydides' account of Pericles' words on the duties and glories of women in his public funeral oration in 431/0, was not something that should enter the head of a decent Athenian woman.[15] Medea, however, is not an Athenian, not even a Greek, but a foreign woman. In comparing herself implicitly with men who are misjudged by their neighbours as proud because retiring and with citizens (male) who should not offend by crassness, she suggests that she has assumed for herself the status of honorary man. This, as Williamson shows, is more emphatically evidenced by Medea's insistence on the authority of the oaths sworn to her by Jason, and later by her contract with Aegeus, again, ratified by solemn oaths. Medea has done her own bargaining - laying out

'an exorbitant price' indeed for her husband in exiling herself from family and homeland - and has, as Williamson says, 'translated herself into the role of a male citizen, operating in the public sphere as Jason's equal'.[16]

Although Medea utilises the pose of weak woman, even with Aegeus, whom she greets as an old friend, she clearly feels herself to be the equal of the men who oppose and threaten her, having rights in the eyes of the gods and a justifiable sense of her own value.

Medea's inclusion of the chorus women in her peculiar state ('for an exorbitant price we must buy a husband', 232-4) may be a deliberate ploy on her part to make them feel they can sympathise with her, but it also reminds the audience of Medea's own aberration from conventional marriage procedures, whether known (Athenian fifth-century) or imagined (mythical, Colchian, Iolchian or Corinthian). At any rate, what she then stresses is the communality of stereoptypical female marriage problems: how to learn instantly the way to please a husband to whom a new wife might as well be a foreigner, so alien, so new is she to his *oikos*; how to cope with the isolation and boredom of being bound to one house, one man; how to survive the very real dangers of childbirth.[17] Her assertion that she would 'rather stand three times with a shield in battle than give birth once' (250-1) might indicate to a male audience that, in resorting to such emotional hyperbole about a natural female process, she shows understandable female incomprehension of the realities of war. This hyberbole is counterbalanced by her later statement that, although 'in all other things a woman is full of fear, incapable of looking on battle or cold steel' (263-4), she can be spurred to murder by infringement of her emotional territorial rights. Though Page envisages Medea's exclamation at 250/1 as a 'heresy'[18] which would horrify the patriotic and militarily alert Athenian audience of 431 B.C., it has, surely, the same intensifying force as Lady Macbeth's:

> I have given suck, and know
> How tender 'tis to love the babe that milks me:
> I would, while it was smiling in my face,
> Have pluck'd my nipple from his boneless gums,
> And dash'd the brains out, had I so sworn
> As you have done to this.
>
> (*Macbeth*, I.vii. 54-9)

The point is, not that Medea denigrates male bravery but that she advances a concept of female strength, which has to do, neither with the manliness of military courage nor with the *thrasos* of female daring, but with an ability to endure and survive.

In order to win over the Corinthian women, Medea has appealed to their need to have their problems, weaknesses and strengths recognised and articulated. She ensures their silence at the end of her first long speech to them (216-66), but her second major speech (364-409) implicates them more deeply in her murderous plans; she explains why she made the pretence of subservience to Creon, and gloats over the possibilities open to her, before reflecting on her need to ensure her escape. For Medea is not suicidal, and though she is passionate in her reaction to Jason's desertion of her, the passion that chiefly motivates her is not jealousy or despair but anger. The use of poisons and the preference for life rather than a glorious death, following the achievement of revenge, suggest, not the heroic male of tragedy but the devious and enduring woman. However, if necessary, Medea says, she would use the sword, even if it meant her immediate death (392-4). She is not intending to take the 'woman's solution'.[19] She invokes Hecate, and Knox, seeking to show that this does not necessarily mean she is pictured as sorceress, remarks that Hecate had an aspect 'which had nothing to do with sorcery or poison but rather with the home and a woman's functions in it'.[20] Certainly it would be inappropriate for her to invoke Hera, Demeter, Artemis or Aphrodite at this point, since what she is about to embark on concerns none of the usual areas of female activity - marriage, fertility, childbirth, chastity or sexual love. Hecate is invoked as a very ancient tutelary deity of women, but also as one with whom Medea considers she has a special relationship - as Hippolytus does with Artemis, and Odysseus with Athena.

Lines 401-7 signal the male/female duality of Medea's nature: for the first time, she addresses herself in the second person, indicating her awareness that she will have to be her own master and order and control her own emotions if she is to achieve what she intends. It is not simply that she is 'in two minds' about her purposes; she is actually, later, to speak as two people, the revenger and the mother - male and female roles. At this point, she seems merely to be talking

to herself, but the division into speaker and hearer is finally to become oppositional. The goads to unwomanly action are such as might spur a man: no man of honour and courage would betray the reputation of his ancestors (especially if they include a god), or allow his enemies to laugh in triumph over him. The finality of the terse '*epistasai de*' (407) - 'you understand how to proceed' - closes off the 'male' voice and Medea resumes her 'female' voice to the chorus with the wry rehearsal of what men say: 'we are women, unable to perform noble deeds, but most skilful architects of every sort of harm' (407-9). This perverse compliment/condemnation of her own sex is followed by the chorus's celebration of the notion that among the upheavals and reversals they find themselves witnessing (one of which is the fact that now *men*, not women, are remarkable for their deceit and dishonour), is the possibility that a time will come when the female sex will be honoured - because, compared to men, they will seem more faithful, more honest. But if women had been given the capacity to sing of great themes, they suggest, the woman's voice would have been heard long before in praise of great, good or suffering women, in which latter category, the antistrophe shows, Medea clearly belongs. For a (predominantly) male audience, the irony of the situation (simple women excited to expressions of sorority and sympathy for a woman who is already showing signs, and will show more, of being neither simple nor a 'real' woman) may confirm suspicions of Medea's ruthlessness, since she is prepared to exploit other women less intelligent but more humane - in a word, more normal, as women - than herself.

Jason sees Medea as both stereotypically female in her sexual jealousy (569-73) and monstrously distorted as a woman in that she allows her jealousy to overcome her better interests as well as the laws of morality and motherhood. To him she is both the ordinary woman with whom he has shared a bed, and the exceptional type of all extremes of otherness: barbarian, female, and (that freak of nature or nurture) a clever woman. When she wishes to dupe him into helping her, Medea pretends to agree with his stereotypical views, and recants her previous foolishness, to which, she says all women are prone:

> Well, we women are, I will not say bad creatures, but we are what we are. So you ought not to imitate our nature or return our childishness with childishness. (889-91)

She counters his fears about her exceptional cunning with recourse to the cliché about the foolish and childlike nature of women where emotions are concerned. Again, at 928, she resorts to an evocation of type when she explains her tears over the children by saying that 'a woman is by nature female and prone to tears'. And at 945, Medea has a quasi-aside ('Yes, if she is a woman like the rest'), which is taken by Philip Vellacott as a response to Jason saying: 'I'm pretty sure she'll win him over', and by Kovacs to Jason's 'Most certainly, and I think I shall persuade her'.[21] Whichever translation is accepted, Medea is again adopting a third person (male) stereotyping voice to talk about women - either (in the first case) their ability to get round susceptible old men, or, in the latter case, their inability to resist Jason's persuasive charm. Although she is speaking here about Glauke, Medea has, either in her past or in the course of the play, shown evidence of both of these female characteristics.

Modern directors may choose to signal the male/female ambiguities in Medea's character by use of movement or voice, by the use of costume, or by the decisions they take about casting - contrasting the physical presence or appearance of Medea with those of the Corinthian Women and the male characters. Actress and director both need to decide the extent to which Medea's male-ness is natural to her, or is part of an assumed (acted) identity.

2) Medea the foreigner

To increase feelings of sympathy she is hoping to evoke from the chorus at the end of her first big speech, Medea points out that added to the inherent difficulties and dangers of being a woman, she has to bear the further burden of being a foreigner. Hall points out that making her a non-Greek seems to be another of Euripides' innovations.[22] While not removing Medea's sorceress status, Euripides nevertheless makes it less important than her alien exoticism. Medea, Page says:

> is just such a woman as his audience would expect a foreign princess to be. She has nearly all the features of the type - unrestrained excess in lamentation, a readiness to fawn on authority, the powers of magic, childish surprise at falsehoods and broken promises. All

> these qualities were known to be common in foreign parts; Herodotos and the Persian invasions had made them commonplaces. (1938, xix)

Indeed, a tautology of otherness might be expected from Medea since both barbarians and women are, characteristically, according to Athenian norms, naive, given to exhibitions of over-emotionalism, and repositories of alien, dangerous knowledge or crafts. But at no time will Euripides allow his audience to patronise Medea or to find her predictable. She is, certainly, 'not one of us' - how could a rational, civilised audience think that she was? - but she has an alarming ability (alarming because more than might be expected of a woman, certainly of a foreign woman) to control at least the appearance of her passions, and to refuse to be beaten into submission by Greek male authority. She *appears* to kowtow to Creon, and later to Jason, but for her own ends.

Her off-stage cries and lamentations, and her behaviour as reported by the Nurse bespeak the savage female of a barbarous species. The Nurse describes her 'wild-bull eyes' (92), her stare like a mad bull or a lioness guarding her cubs (186-8), and (36) her love of her sons turned to hatred for them. Medea's invocations to Themis and Artemis at 160 continue a destructive, suicidal theme, begun at 96-7 and followed at 111-14 with the wish for the destruction of Jason and his children and the ruin of the whole house. But her premature lamentation for her sons (1019-39), albeit distraught, enumerates the forms and ceremonies of a civilised Greek society, in which a mother has clearly delineated duties and rights. The 'ceremonies of innocence' (to use a Yeatsian idea) are reciprocal: mother plays her part in her son's rite of passage into marriage, and son, his part in his parent's rite of passage into death. To the inappropriacy of mother mourning for young child, Medea adds the inappropriacy of mourning for the as yet living, but at this, her moment of final resolution, she must also mourn the destruction of part of her identity, a status she acquired through her husband and which she retains through her sons.[23] As Rehm points out, Medea's murder of Glauke and Creon is so devised as to present a perversion of Greek ritual marriage patterns; as a surrogate mother, she sends to the bride gifts which transform her into her own nuptial torch, and effects 'a perverse consummation of Glauke's marriage by providing her with a male [Creon] to embrace and lie with in death'.[24] In the monstrousness of her revenge, as in her decision to sentence Jason to a living death without

sons, Medea proclaims to an Athenian audience the underlying barbarism of her nature. When she becomes once again an outcast because of her own murderous acts, she will lose any claim to the security and sweetness of Greek order, and her farewell to her sons, as she, it appears, prepares to go into exile and they stay in Corinth, is simultaneously a farewell to her adopted Greekness.

By 431 B.C., the first generation of children of non-Athenian mothers disenfranchised by Pericles' 451/0 B.C. citizenship legislation would have come to adulthood, and the predicament of such young people and their parents would be becoming apparent.[25] Jason's politic remarriage makes fifth-century Athenian sense; priggish and sententious male chauvinist pig though he may seem to a modern audience, he has a good case since the best way to protect his non-pureblooded-Greek sons is to marry himself into the Corinthian royal house and thereby gain the support and protection of Greek *philoi*. Perhaps Euripides' audience would at first see Medea's indignation about Jason's broken vows and his remarriage as an indication of typically alien naivety; they would not expect a primitive exotic like Medea to think like a sensible woman (as Jason expresses it at 913) about the precedence realpolitik must take over affective attachments, however asserted or ratified. However, because Medea images herself as a kind of honorary man, and in all her undertakings with the male characters is seen arriving in different ways at what might be described as 'contracts', she begins to assume another dual nature; while always foreign, she gains credibility as a political animal who is as capable as any Greek of doing what is best for the state (that is, her own personal state), even if it means transgressing laws of emotional attachment such as love of mother for children.

A distinction is made between the status of Medea as *xenos* and as *barbaros*. At 222, she may be including herself in reference to those alien visitors who need to comply with the customs of the city, but at 388, the use of *xenos* suggests that she sees herself again as honorary male, in the position of seeking refuge in exile from a (male) guest-friend. Jason is later to offer his *xenoi* (613) as useful contacts for Medea in her exile, an offer she spurns at 616. But the chorus has used the word *proxenos* at 359 - 'what protector of strangers will you find' - recalling to the

audience Medea's invocation to Zeus (332), the protector of strangers, and, as father of Themis, a god who has a particular interest in the keeping of oaths. Medea has understood Jason's promises to her as having been given to an equal, and his reneging on them is the supreme statement of how unequal, in his eyes, she is.

Just as she shows a duality of male/female and of clever/foolish, so Medea implies that, though she is from a foreign, barbarous country (for example, at 256, enlisting the sympathy of the chorus), she is not herself 'barbarous' since, because of her divine family connections, her condition transcends boundaries of civilised and uncivilised. Jason acknowledges her clever mind, but implies that in being ruled, as he contests, by Eros, she shows the true colours of her gender and race. True, all the Greeks now recognise her cleverness (539), but only because of his bringing her from a barbarous land at the back of beyond and exhibiting her powers to the civilised world. He is later to conclude that he was mad to do such a thing (1330-2), using once more the Greek/barbarian contrast. Whatever her powers of witchcraft or wisdom, her actions on their progress to Corinth have spoken emphatically of her essentially barbaric, lawless nature; no Greek woman would have behaved like that, Jason says (1339-4). Although in their first encounter (536-44) Jason credits her with understanding the importance to society of justice, law and freedom from the rule of force, and although he compliments her by assuming she shares the value he, as a male, puts on fame, he is to discover that her foreign female roots, with their demand for appropriate revenge in a matter of passion, are stronger than any acquired Greek values. Her desire for revenge, however, is not expressed by Medea at the level of eye-scratching bitchiness, but as a response to a dire and violent affront, a *hubris*, which Jason and his new *philoi* have perpetrated against her. She recognises that, for all Jason's comments about her fame in Greek lands, she will always be to him and all Greeks, a barbarian - hence her sour comment at 591/2: 'You thought that in later years a barbarian wife would discredit you'.

In terms of its implications for modern staging, Medea's foreign otherness can now be indicated by casting, since in an unmasked production, contrasts in ethnicity between actors are

immediately obvious. But, as will be indicated later, the semiotics of dress and movement can also indicate Medea's difference from the world of Corinth.

3) Abnormal cleverness

The cleverness which renders Medea egregious is acknowledged by all three men with whom she has interviews. Creon puts it as a major reason for his fear that she may harm his daughter, for, were she not 'a clever woman and skilled in many evil arts' (285), Medea would simply be a foreign woman without protector in his country, and so, powerless. Significantly, Medea's response (294-301) does not focus on the problems for a *woman* of being thought too clever, but for *anyone* who is generally perceived as more clever than those known to be wise. (Once more, it seems, Medea speaks as 'honorary man'.) For Jason, Medea's cleverness is incidental, almost accidental; her irrational but typically female sexual jealousy is what renders her, for him, dangerously unpredictable, exacerbated as it is by her barbarian lack of any of the constraints which a decent Greek woman would feel.[26] However, he recognises that, for her, the reputation for cleverness may be something she values (although she has, to Creon, at 292-3, made great show of regretting it), since it is one of the benefits he says she gained by leaving her home and coming with him to Greece (539-41).

For Aegeus, it is an important factor in their relationship. Whether or not he goes on to visit Pittheus as he intended, he has shared his perplexity over the instructions of Phoebus's oracle with 'a wise mind', and made a reciprocal agreement by which Medea will supply fertility drugs in return for sanctuary. So, in the episode with Aegeus, two kinds of 'cleverness' are implied: Medea's 'wise mind', which may, Aegeus hopes, help her to see through the cryptic riddle of the oracle, and her skills in *pharmakeia* which will end his childlessness.

Of the three men on whom Medea exercises her greatest skill (as actress), only Creon persists in mistrusting her for her cleverness, realising that her powers are not restricted to knowledge of pharmacology but that it is her knowledge of how to deceive, manipulate and exploit even the wisest people which renders her dangerous. Indeed, the range of approaches she makes to Creon

- as rational woman, as suppliant, as parent - show her ability in this respect.[27] If what Euripides intended his audience to feel about his Medea was that she is more dangerous for her power over people than for her powers of sorcery or *pharmakia*, this would explain why her nature as witch, niece of Circe, is played down, and her expertise as actor stressed. In some modern productions, however, Medea's reputation as sorceress is invoked and directors who choose to do this may be assuming in their audiences a shared knowledge of Medea the Enchantress, gained from versions of the myth designed for children in film, cartoons and T.V. programmes. Playing Medea as a witch-woman does ease the problem (for modern audiences) of her transition, in the final movement of the play, to more than human since it builds an element of unreality, even of fantasy, into what might otherwise be supposed a domestic tragedy.

4) Medea, grand-daughter of Helios

The fourth remarkable and 'other' aspect of Medea is her royal, indeed, her semi-divine, status. It is to this that she refers when she needs to stiffen her flagging resolve, since to be the grand-daughter of Helios is something, not only to be proud of but to defend from insult and affront. She first uses this spur in the speech in which she also first resorts to third person self-address (405/6), and later she calls on Helios to witness Aegeus's oath. Both occasions are ones of great solemnity, in which Medea herself devises a moment of almost ritualistic importance. In the Aegeus scene, this ritual is self-evident, but in the earlier usage, the ritual merely consists in the invocation, to which the chorus serves as witnessing body.[28] It is for the chorus to invoke Helios as Medea exits to kill the children, reminding the god and the audience yet again of Medea's divine connections; and in imaging her as a Fury, an Erinys (1260), the chorus further acknowledges her distance from ordinary humanity.

Medea subsequently appears translated from human to immortal level in the chariot Helios has himself provided for her protection. Two implications of this transformation need to be noted. First: although she has murdered her children and Helios's grandchildren, one of her motives for doing so was to uphold the honour of the god since a *hubris* to his descendants might be considered an affront to the god himself. This must be the reason that Helios provides her with a

getaway vehicle, but we have been aware through the play that Medea has taken the insult of the imagined laughter of Jason and his new friends at a highly personal level. Secondly, we should note that when Medea exits to murder, she will never return as ordinary human woman: since she will have killed her role as mother, and has been rejected as wife, she will have no recognised, specifically female, status - she will be neither maid, wife, widow, nor mother. She is an exile, a murderer, a monster, but not a 'normal woman'. In Boedeker's phrase, she has 'become Medea', which is a creature, monstrous yet marvellous, like no other.[29] If she has destroyed Jason's hopes for his future through his sons, she has also deconstructed her remaining human family role as mother since, in killing her own children, she consciously renders void her claim to that social status. From her position above human anguish, in the chariot of the Sun, she can instigate a cult, plan a new life for herself and foretell with relish the unheroic death in store for Jason. But she is also above the status of tragic human being; though she speaks in passing of her love for her children, it is Jason who now grieves over the memory of the physical bodies of the children, speaking of their faces, their flesh, wishing to fold them in his arms, and it is to Jason that Euripides gives the final speech of lamentation.

Finally, then, Medea, removed from the world of human suffering, is rendered both super- and sub-human. Her suffering as grieving mother has been witnessed already, but the audience is, at the last, persuaded to transfer sympathy from Medea to Jason. If the audience has been sympathetic to Medea until her final exit, or if, indeed, as has been suggested, Medea's murder of her own children was Euripides' innovation, how is this apotheosis to be taken? Barlow sees the audience's previous identification with Medea and resultant confusion and unease at this point as the real subversion of Euripides' play.[30] Can an audience which has been encouraged to respond with sympathy to the agonies of a rejected wife and loving mother, forced to exact terrible revenge in a cause of honour, now accept the translation of that woman to a monstrously exultant Erinys? Can it accept the change from realistic psychological complexity to a gold paper cut-out, a two-dimensional figure, swinging on the *mechane*? This latter question is, perhaps, one which would simply not have occurred to Euripides' own audience, but which will certainly occur to a modern director considering how to stage Medea's translation, and to an

actress trying to make a realistic reading of the human Medea's motives and actions consistent with her final appearance as an immortal.

Playing to the on-stage audience

The other perennial problem for modern directors of ancient Greek tragedy is the chorus, since, as has been pointed out in the introductory chapter, this is one aspect which formally and strategically affects the play and its production. Unlike certain plays (e.g. *Bacchae*, *Women of Troy*, or *The Phoenician Women*) in which the chorus represents a group of women and which work best if there is an on-stage presence of several chorus members, *Medea* can be performed with a one-woman chorus. But this would mean that the variation in tone and flexibility of sympathies would have to be credibly carried by one voice. Moreover, if, as very often happened until the 1980s, the chorus is not sung at all, there is less chance of showing this variety and flexibility through music. The chorus in *Medea* has, like any chorus, the function of commenting on the action of the episodes, of counterpointing the voices of individuals with the voices of the group. This is not to say that the chorus as a group is assumed to speak as a normative voice; it speaks as is appropriate to its group character, and it may be seen by the audience to be naive or to be wise, depending on the circumstances. Part of the chorus's function in this play is precisely to be 'female' according to Athenian perception - that is, to be easily swayed by emotion and to be ineffectual in preventing disaster because inherently powerless. It is swayed by Medea's persuasiveness to remain silent about her intentions, even though present (as on-stage audience) when she uses her acting and rhetorical skills to work Creon, Aegeus and Jason to her manage. Like any audience won over in the early stages of a play by an actor's technical expertise in making a character sympathetic, it continues to relate to Medea, recognising, even in her transgressive and alien behaviour and emotions, aspects of its own experiences.[31]

At the point at which Medea has irrevocably sentenced her own children to death by sending them to Glauke with the poisoned gifts (976), the chorus is still sufficiently sympathetic to her to

lament her sorrows (996-9). During her speech of resolution and farewell, Medea appeals to her on-stage audience as to friends ('My courage is gone, women', 1043), and even as she exits to kill the children, her last speech to the chorus is prefaced by the word 'Friends' (1236). However, this is her last appearance as a mortal woman, and after she has committed the murders, the chorus will not be able to sympathise with her as a fellow woman and bereaved mother. When she reappears, transformed into a more than human creature, Medea will have no more need of acting or of her on-stage audience of Corinthian women since, for the spectacle she presents to Jason, she wants only to hear his cries of grief as her applause. In establishing the cult at the temple of Hera Akraia (1378-83), she is almost acting like a divine *choregos* dictating how a production is to be carried out rather than the professional actor dependent on the approval of an audience.

Euripides' *Medea* on stage in England

Though English theatre has not in general attempted *Medea* on the spectacular scale, it has been, over the last twenty years, often performed in both mainstream and small-scale, professional and amateur theatre. The reason for the story's popularity in the seventies and eighties is easy to see: Medea could be recreated, in versions of her story which avoided the demands of the final transformation to inhuman immortal, as a feminist icon. In 1977, for example, the Italian playwright/performer, Franca Rame, devised a one-woman play version in which Medea's motivation for killing her children was her need to assert her freedom, her independence from female roles. Rame performed this *Medea* as the final part of a four-play show under the collective title *It's All Bed, Board and Church* [OUdb167] at the Riverside theatre, London, in 1982. Reviewing Rame's work, Barbara Schulman wrote:

> These plays may not satisfy the stringent demands of avid feminists ... but ... Rame has struck on a formula which speaks to that vast majority of women who have not yet acknowledged inferior treatment, let alone their capacity to act in their own defence, in a language they can respond to.[32]

Another instance of feminist reclamation through recreation of the Medea story was Monstrous Regiment's version, selected by Goodman as an 'exemplary' piece of British feminist theatre.[33] The work engaged with the idea of the silenced woman's voice, and with the problem of presenting a 'mythic character in a way which makes it possible to understand her, but does not imply that the audience should necessarily like or admire her' (228). Without 'preaching' or, apparently, forcing 'relevances' on the audience, the piece showed Medea as a suitable case for feminist treatment.

Those who wished to claim that Euripides was proto-feminist could pick out those passages which relate to woman's disempowerment in fifth-century Athens, and point to the chorus's sympathy for Medea as rejected woman, exile, and disappointed mother. The first stasimon seems, superficially, to shout across the centuries with a suffragist's voice, and Tony Harrison developed this idea in his (1985) *Medea: A Sex-War Opera* [OUdb180]. Harrison uses opposed female and male choruses, and gives to the female chorus the demand:

> As the sex war's still being fought
> which sex does a myth support?
> you should be asking.
> What male propaganda lurks
> behind most operatic works
> that Music's masking?[34]

This self-referential query not only expresses the substance of 422-30, but also suggests an echo of the Nurse's comments at 190-8 about the male monopoly and exploitation of song. This work, though intended as an opera text, has never been performed so cannot truly be described as a performance reading of the original, and one can only hypothesise about its possible effect or success as theatre. It is worth noting, however, that in his reworking of the story, Harrison sets Medea as a kind of feminist icon beside Heracles (Hercules, in Harrison's version) a masculine icon, and another child-killer, so, although using a form (opera) which allows larger-than-life representation, Harrison is effectively reducing the dominance of Medea by counterbalancing her with a male superhero. The style of the piece is deliberately non-realistic and posits, in its very title, the polarisation of gender extremes. The construction of myth is shown, through reference to modern media, to be an ongoing activity and one which is being fought over by the sexes.[35]

After the 1970s and 1980s experimentation with the story of Medea outlined above, it seemed that directors felt drawn back to the original play, in various translations, to discover what had inspired the versions, and to see if resonances could be shown without straying from a text that could be advertised as 'Euripides' tragedy'. The attraction of the part of Medea, particularly in the light of feminist reviewing of her, meant that directors could expect to interest top-rank actresses for the lead, and present a prestigious production in terms of casting, thus attracting non-specialist, mainstream audiences to a performance which might in other ways have seemed to have little to commend it to them. In 1986 there was a crop of productions of the play, and the comparative analysis which follows takes that year as a starting point.[36]

Staging the on-stage audience

For their English audiences, directors have tended in recent years to focus on Medea's alien status; it is her ethnic otherness which has seemed to have particular resonance in a Britain still uncomfortably coming to terms with its multiracial and multi-faith composition. A simple way of registering this otherness is to cast Medea in racial contrast to the Greeks. In Toby Robertson's 1986 Theatr Clwyd production [OUdb169], Eileen Atkins was a white Medea in a black Corinth, while at the Lyric, directed by Mary McMurray [OUdb178], Madhur Jaffrey was an Asian Medea in an otherwise white, western cast. In 1991, Claire Benedict was a striking black 'voodoo sorceress' Medea in the Manchester Royal Exchange production [OUdb175] directed by Phyllida Lloyd.

But even where a racial contrast between Medea and Corinthians was pointed up by casting, the chorus was shown to be largely sympathetic to Medea until their speech which registers her ceasing to be a 'normal woman' - that is, at 1280-91, after the murder of the boys. To Eileen Atkins's Medea, the three woman chorus provided (according to Eric Shorter in the *Daily Telegraph)* a 'melodious and beautifully phrased West Indian sing-song, [driving] home Medea's aching solitude'. Nancy Meckler's (1985) production [OUdb179] saw a reduction of the chorus

to two women, providing Medea (Linda Bassett) with 'a pair of plausible confidantes to whom she can pour out her trouble' (Milton Shulman, *London Standard,* May 6 1985). Madhur Jaffrey's Medea had only a one-woman chorus, Lynn Farleigh - thought by Oliver Taplin, writing in the *TLS*, 20 June 1986, to be one of the best things about the production: 'In some ways the best [performance] is by Lynn Farleigh as the solo 'chorus', marble white and cool, who, despite having no music or metre [this was the Philip Vellacott translation, disliked by many critics] makes the play's lyrics worth listening to'. This chorus was one of a crowd of modern tourists visiting Corinth; she experienced as it were, a time warp, which took her back into the middle of the Medea story, so giving to her speeches the distance of modern commentary, together with the recognition of universal human experience. This is very different from making the chorus simply a sounding board for Medea's outpourings, a confidante in the tradition of the one Cherubini provides (Neris) in his opera. In the Manchester Royal Exchange production, Claire Benedict had a chorus of nine to appeal to, manipulate and orchestrate. With a chorus body of that number, it is more possible to use dance and movement to indicate the difference between lyric and dialogue, and to show chorus sympathies. Circular movement played on Medea's references to Helios, with the chorus using mirrors to suggest sunlight playing on and giving power to the sorceress. (Because the MRE theatre is in the round, of course, this use of circling was made more possible.) But the chorus was also ranged in two lines for the battle of words between Jason and Medea.

Jonathan Kent's 1992 production at the Almeida [OUdb168], with Diana Rigg as Medea, used a three-women chorus, with the young, middle and older age range utilising the 'three ages of woman' idea. They were dressed in sombre greys and black, in modern Greek village woman style, so providing the contrast to Medea's elegant robes. Some unaccompanied singing was used, and the movement was choreographed imaginatively to suggest a middle road between static realism and actual dance. The set was impressive; slightly rusted metal plate walls enclosing a courtyard with a small down-stage left pool (instead of an altar), central upstage doorway with an enclosed passage leading into the house, one large stage right gateway supported outside by rough timber/metal buttresses. The percussive value of the metal walls was

exploited both by Medea and the chorus. The enclosed box set helped to give the necessary feeling of imprisonment, which applies to the Corinthian women almost as much as to Medea. A blast of wind brought in, at crucial times, a flurry of dead leaves, and the chorus mimicked the image by movement; disturbed by the force of Medea's emotion, unable to act to prevent the catastrophe.

To reject, or maybe to duck out from, the challenge of using an authentically numerous chorus presents the director with other choices; a body of choruswomen (as in the MRE production) can be exploited for its choreographic and musical potential; a two- or three-women chorus can share the lyrics between them, playing on the 'three ages of woman' division but employing unison, antiphonal or contrapuntal effects also. A lone woman chorus may either identify closely with the Medea or maintain more of an objective distance. Bacon remarks the use of choral voice to express shared identity and the consequent use of first person singular voice, noting particularly in *Hippolytus* and *Medea* that:

> the agonies of the suffering female...provoke the sympathising female choruses in these plays to reflections on love's moderate and immoderate manifestations and in each case, to expressions of intensely personal longing in the first person singular, to be spared its more overwhelming form.[37]

It could be argued that it is easier to show Medea as arch-manipulator by giving her a crowd, as well as individuals, to sway - and a crowd of her own gender, at that - whereas, if the director wishes to play down Medea's demonic nature, a single, sympathetic confidante seems to facilitate access to those interior spaces of Medea's mind and heart which appear to be so much on show in her soliloquies, since the audience may really believe that what she says is 'for your ears only', not a calculated press release.

So, to a large extent, the modern director's choices on the use of chorus are dictated by the larger decisions which will already have been made about the reading of the character of Medea, and these larger decisions will in turn have been arrived at taking into account the implications of performing *Medea* anyway. Modern English theatre inherits from post-fifties experiments a

readiness to essay mixed genre performance but with a preference for 'realism', and from a constructed cultural folk memory of Shakespeare's theatre, a reverence for the text, and a sneaking enjoyment of larger-than-life characters. Medea has twice been compared to Lady Macbeth in this chapter, but the Shakespeare character who most resembles Medea is Cleopatra - a beautiful monster, driven by sexual passion and energy, cunning in acting and *pharmakia,* who effects at her point of departure from the stage scene a self-translation to goddess, assuming the robes of Isis/Venus. English audiences have always had an affection for Shakespeare's Cleopatra,[38] a role which most actresses would hope to try at some point, so artistic directors might well expect that a *Medea* with a famous actress would succeed. The play is a good 'star vehicle' and it allows an actress to display her ability to play both the larger-than-life diva and the ill-used, discarded foreign wife driven to desperate lengths by male oppression.

Medea as Tragic Heroine or feminist icon

To an audience which is accustomed to the moral values of Miss Prism ('The good end happily, the bad unhappily. That is the meaning of fiction'), or conditioned by early twentieth-century Shakespeare scholarship to look for Aristotle's rules of tragedy in the work even of his predecessors, Medea's fate, and indeed her character, don't seem quite right for a tragic heroine.[39] The legacy of Protestant Elizabethan theatre is to require that in general the wicked should not triumph, and that, though man's potential puts him only a little below the angels, if he presumes to godlike status in the human world, defying human or divine law, he will be put back in his place. A tragic hero must be great, but great does not mean either wholly good or wholly bad. For Shakespeare scholars early in this century, the greatness of Shakepeare's tragic heroes held the seed of their 'tragic flaw' - the *harmatia* of Aristotle's commentary. A tragic hero is exceptional.

In this latter respect, at least, Medea might qualify as having tragic hero potential. Like Pentheus, she is exceptional, out of the common run of men and women. It is precisely because to be exceptional is dangerous that choruses and normative voices (messengers, servants,

citizens) throughout Greek tragedy ask the gods only for the safety of the mean of life, the unremarkable state which challenges or threatens neither gods nor men. The second stasimon in *Medea* sites Medea's exceptional quality in her being possessed by her passion; her *thymos* has been taken over by Aphrodite, it seems to the chorus, and this is a terrible visitation.

But possession by sexual jealousy, which Jason, too, blames for Medea's behaviour, is not the whole story, and both Euripidean and modern audiences can see this. Euripides defers the first confrontation between Medea and Jason until the audience has heard Creon's assessment of Medea's exceptional nature; she is just too clever for her own, and certainly for anyone else's, good. This is not the kind of wisdom which, the chorus is to assert, is sometimes found in a small number of women (1085-8), but a female deviousness allied to male strength of mind which renders Medea something between genders. Add to this the concern for loss of face (as opposed to loss of reputation, which concerns, for example, Phaedra), and we see Medea as a kind of masculinised woman, dangerously uncontrollable because not confined by normal rules of society or by gender role. Those who would class *Medea* as a proto-feminist play would seem to miss the point: the play is about male anxieties over a powerful woman who is out of their control, not a plea or protest on behalf of disempowered women. Small wonder that in 1985/6 - so long after the initial shock of feminism in Britain, but half-way through the second term of Margaret Thatcher's administration - the play still seemed appropriate.

Of course, there is a message in the play which we can designate proto-feminist insofar as it concerns awareness of female disempowerment. On this question of Euripides' so-called 'misogyny', Just says that certainly Euripides shows women as perpetrators of terrible crimes,

> motivated by passion, jealousy, and vindictiveness, and committed with deceit and guile. The complicating factor is that Euripides also presents women's actions as emanating from the insecurity of their position. Vindictive ferocity stems from a social impotence in which deception and guile are the only weapons and where jealousies and hatreds have been born of justified fear.[40]

It is the desperation of disempowerment which Euripides illustrates, Just suggests; not 'how women naturally are', but what women might be like if they are let down by their usual sources of support and have no legitimate channels of aid.

This is a way into the play which has considerable appeal for the late twentieth-century theatre-goer. This view of Medea stresses her alien status, shows Creon as oppressive, Jason as calculating or weak or treacherous, and makes Medea a rather admirable heroine driven to desperate ends to strike a blow for all women at the mercy of a male-dominated society. She becomes an acceptable tragic heroine for a liberal audience.

The semiotics of costuming can reinforce such points about Medea's foreignness or about her resistance to a male-dominated society. In the Lyric Hammersmith production, for example, Madhur Jaffrey's own Asian identity was further 'orientalised' by a dramatic black and scarlet brocade mandarin suit, long earrings and fingernail extensions. Jaffrey's Jason (Julian Glover, who was particularly good at suggesting weakness masquerading as strength), wearing a black leather bomber jacket over khaki polo neck jumper, was described in the *Observer* of 8/6/86 as 'an aging juvenile delinquent with metal-studded arm-band'. Eileen Atkins's Medea [OUdb169], a white exile in black Corinth, 'resembled an elderly flower child in her large fuzzy wig' (Eric Shorter, *Daily Telegraph*) - left over from the hippy trail to Haiti? Claire Benedict's cropped haired, black and beautiful Medea at the MRE [OUdb175] was confronted by a rather shifty, white-suited, seedy, colonial Jason. The 1986 Gate Theatre production [OUdb174] put Jason in a suit, but the Almeida production in 1992 [OUdb168] reversed the usual design scene by having Medea in sophisticated, smooth weave fabrics, and the male characters in dark, heavy weave, slightly less urbane versions of modern dress; Jason, for example, wore a coat which in cut and weight resembled a donkey jacket.

Whether we see Medea as isolated more by race or by her fellow characters' construction of what it is to be a woman ruled by passion, the burden of sympathy is with her, and the burden of guilt for her actions is on Jason and Greek society. She does what she does because she can see no

other way to achieve what she has to. Of the performance by Linda Bassett in Nancy Meckler's 1985 Liverpool Playhouse production [OUdb179], Michael Billington of the *Guardian* wrote: 'Ms. Bassett shows us a woman forced to do the unspeakable through implacable logic'. (However, it has to be said that this production distanced the horror of child-murder to a degree by using 'straw-haired manikins' to represent the children - though this may have been an effect born of necessity for this small-scale touring production.) Neither a feminist nor a post-colonial reading of the play lacks justification from the text, and a director can persuade the audience that it has seen to the heart of the pain of a tragic and oppressed Medea - until the final scene.

Medea's transformation: from 'real woman' to monster-star

For a modern English audience in a commercial theatre (excepting, of course, audiences at productions by specialising 'classics' theatre companies), not just Medea but all performers in the play start as alien creatures. Medea herself, Jason and Aegeus may all have been somewhat familiarised by cartoon, film or prose versions, but they are here presented in the unfamiliar form of Greek tragedy. For audiences unused to this form and its conventions, the Nurse, the Tutor, the Messenger are roles in an archaic, far-off culture, and the Chorus is simply an oddity. The director's first aim will be to persuade audiences that these mythical characters are also human beings, having recognisable feelings and emotions and being bound by conventions and laws which, although 'other', are yet comparable to conventions and laws which still govern public and private actions. This may be why design for recent productions has eschewed an 'Ancient Greek' look and used eclectic but vaguely modern styles. Freeing the text from the alien of ancient Greece permits the performance to point the recognisably similar in human nature.

However, the audience will finally have to accept the reality of the super- or possibly sub-human, and of the involvement of the immortals in the mortal world. The apotheosis of Medea should not come as an embarrassment; it should be something for which she has been preparing - and so, something which the audience has unconsciously been aware of - from the end of the third episode, the meeting with Aegeus. She gradually divests herself of human female roles, making

herself as nearly as she can a Fury. The most testing aspect of playing Medea, and, indeed, of performing the play, is to effect this transformation from a woman with motives and emotions with which watchers can sympathise to an agent of murderous revenge. The transformation seems to demand two different perfomance modes: realism, and melodrama or Grand Guignol.

Euripides gives the Medea actor two stages in the move from mother to avenger. In the first (lines 1019-80), Medea regrets the loss of her place in the accepted social order: participating in her sons' marriage ceremonies, being cared for by them in old age, knowing they will give her proper burial rites. This can all be addressed to the children, since ostensibly it pertains to the separation enforced by their remaining in Corinth while she is in exile. The physical presence of the children, and their unsuspecting, trusting smiles bring her back to a sort of reality, where she contemplates forgoing her revenge, kidnapping them and taking them with her. At this point, the 'divided self' section of the speech begins, and to the goads of desire for revenge and a need to avoid the mockery of enemies, Medea's logical self adds the reminder that, because of her very public murder of Glauke, the boys will inevitably be facing execution, as will she, by the Corinthians: [41] 'They must die in any case. And since they must, the one who gave them birth shall kill them'. This idea is to be repeated in her final speech before the murder. The final section of this speech comes back to the intensely physical mother/child bond; Medea makes actual contact with the children, stroking their skin, and confronting with agony the innocence which her other self has determined to kill. The biological bond, however it may have been qualified by Greek understanding of the process of conception, is shown to be expressed in passionate maternal affection. But, in asking them to stretch out to her their right hands (1070), she, either deliberately or accidentally, has them enact in miniature the funerary ritual gesture - male mourners saluting the dead with their raised right hands[42] - but it is they, not she, who will die.

The second stage in Medea's translation to resolved revenger comes with her relatively short speech after the Messenger's account of the deaths of Creon and Glauke. In her exchange with the Messenger before the report, she was exultant, gloating, but having heard the Messenger

through, she wastes no time on demonic cackling but gets straight to the point: she must kill her sons at once and flee Corinth. She repeats the lines from her previous speech about the need to kill the boys herself rather than leave them for others to kill less cleanly or lovingly (1240/1). Although she still uses the 'divided self' voice, the speech is remarkable for her use of masculine arming images: 'Arm yourself, my heart' (1242), and later, 'My accursed hand, take the sword' (1244). Whereas she killed Creon and Glauke with the women's weapon, poison, she will use a sword for this killing, which she herself has described (1053-5) as a sacrifice.[43] In the ritual of revenge, she has cast herself as priestess.

Staging the spectacles

For Euripides' audience, Medea's exit after this speech and the sounds of the murder off-stage may have had a double shock effect; not only the horror of the deaths, but (if this coup was Euripides' innovation) the surprise of this horror actually being perpetrated by Medea, not by the Corinthians. At that point, Medea changes her nature; she has autodestructed as woman and can only reappear as a kind of monster. A modern audience knows Medea will kill her own children - that's one of her mythical functions - and this may be why directors try to impose additional shock at the moment of the murder. Mary McMurray's Lyric production had 'prolonged grand guignol squeals of the murdered children from loud-speakers' (John Barber, *Daily Telegraph*, 2/6/86); Nicholas de Jongh (*The Guardian*, 1/6/86) wrote of 'great crashing blasts of sound to mark the infanticide'; Helen Rose (*Time Out*, 4/6/86) found the 'sound effects at times heavy-handed but...used to stomach-churning effectiveness in the chilling presentation of Medea murdering her sons', but the critic from *The Observer* (8/6/86) condemned the use of amplified murder noises, saying that, so far from being terrifying, it caused ripples of embarrassment in the audience.

Jonathan Kent's Almeida *Medea* had the murder actually visible, staged on the platform behind the metal plate back wall of the set. Part of the wall swung down with harsh clanging to reveal the plain glass window through which, before the start of the play, the audience had been able to

see the back view of a seated Medea. Medea had changed into a white robe for the sacrifice, and blood spurted onto the glass and her skirt. Strangely, neither of these attempts at impressing the horror of the moment on the audience seemed wholly to work ; watchers either felt they had been assaulted with sensory shocks in order to manipulate a sense of terror, or felt that after this climax, the final episode was somehow irrelevant or did not make sense. And, indeed, in any production which has striven to make Medea's situation familiar and realistic and her reaction to it tragically heroic, the fact that she not only avoids the romantically 'noble' way of suicide but actually has her escape route and refuge carefully planned out is bound to confuse a modern audience. They thought they were watching the case history of an emotionally abused and discriminated-against member of an ethnic minority of one, whereas it turns out that this was, after all, the story of a serial killer.

What is even more confusing is that, even if the off-stage deaths are given a kind of on-stage realism by use of sound or visual effects, it is impossible to render 'realistic' (in the context of a modern dress production) the dragon-drawn chariot and the flight through the air - nor indeed the fact that Medea can foretell her own and Jason's future. Yet directors cannot cut the final scene; they have to make sense of it for a modern audience. Jonathan Kent's answer was to underplay the spectacle; there was no chariot, but the remaining upper plates of the back wall of the set clashed down to reveal the interior upper level, and dramatically rolling clouds on the cyclorama made a background of movement against which Medea stood like a figurehead. The audience had to imagine the chariot, the protective power of Helios, and Medea's flight. Because the performance style was consistent with what had gone before - elevated but not operatic, convincing but not obviously 'realistic' - the scene did not seem an afterthought, though inevitably it failed to address the problem of Medea's transformation.

Although Mary McMurray's production elected for a more spectacular design effect for the transformation, this did not seem to have solved the problem. Madhur Jaffrey's Medea had been contained to the point of calm, according to some critics,[44] and simply could not make the jump to immortal credible, even though provided with silver-white robes, a sunburst (or serpent?)

crown, and supported by flashing lights and clashing cymbals. At the MRE, the whole production had made more use of stylised movement and evocations of Medea's 'otherness', and the murders and the transformation did not, consequently, present such a problem in terms of performance style consistency. Medea, elevated high above the stage, enveloped the children in a huge cloak to symbolise the (bloodless) murders.

English mainstream theatre, its audiences mildly liberal, middle-educated, and culturally conditioned to prefer text-based work, has a problem in achieving such a *coup de théâtre* as Medea's transformation. For those who use the text as a basis from which to jump into the sensory effects of physical theatre (like Andrei Serban or Silviu Purcarete), or for those who work from a theatrical tradition (notably the Japanese) which some see as having stronger links with conventions of ancient Greek theatre than English theatre now does, it is easier to construct a consistent world for the play, in which a woman can turn into a semi-immortal and, instead of being a monster, become an icon. And yet, the same English audiences who ripple with uneasy embarrassment at the sight of their hitherto realistic Medea turned out in divine drag are accustomed to the monster women of the worlds of entertainment, film and politics: the monster of the child-woman (Lolita); of the female sex-object (Marilyn Monroe); the monster of the hag-playing-girl (Barbara Cartland); of the femme fatale - Circe or Medusa- (Joan Collins, Bette Davis); of the woman who devours and destroys men, the monster who sacrifices everything for her success in a man's world.

Self-referential use of The Actress

In a small way (perhaps in too small a way to make a point), English mainstream theatre has tentatively tried to use *Medea*'s potential as a vehicle for a star in a self-referential way: that is, by making the audience conscious of The Actress playing The Actress, Medea. This involves the audience using a double perspective when they come to a performance, in the same way that Passolini's viewers did when watching the diva who had sung Medea dominate her scenes without singing, simply by looking the icon of opera she was known to be. Madhur Jaffrey had

already made a name for herself as an Indian movie actress when she played Medea, but this was less important to her audiences than the fact that she had also made a considerable hit on television as a cookery expert. Indeed, her book, *A Taste of India*, was advertised in the programme, and in *London Portrait*, June 1986, she was interviewed about her life, her cooking and her playing of Medea! It was an amazingly miscalculated stroke of publicity; to read that the actor playing Medea was also a doctor of chemistry might have added something to the audience's picture of the talented poisoner, but to read about her mother's belief in almonds as brainfood, or her own fondness for hamburgers, mangoes and chips did not.[45]

It could be said that casting Diana Rigg as Medea was similarly referential; she was famous as the elegantly Amazonian Mrs. Emma Peel in the 1965 TV series, *The Avengers*. Inspite of an active life in straight theatre and films since then (including the role of Phaedra in Harrison's *Phaedra Brittanica* in 1975), the cut-glass-accent-in-black-leather image stayed with her. In her performance, however, the quality of English containment and a suggestion of good breeding, if not actually a patrician background, was put to good use. Though one might expect fire from Medea, because of her grandfather, what she more often shows is steel; she must have the strength to conceal her passion, and, as the chorus says, be like a stone or a piece of iron (1280/1) to carry out her plan. Diana Rigg succeeded, for most critics, in suggesting the fire behind the facade, but to what extent the shadow of Emma Peel, the fighting woman, hovered round the audience's viewing of the performance is impossible to say.

The self-referential use of a 'star' in the role of Medea is dangerous territory. The audience may see no farther than the known identity of the actress when in fact it needs to see Medea as superhuman actress, not just human diva.[46] Similar problems may occur when experiments with cross-gender casting are made. Sue-Ellen Case suggests that a feminist reader might decide that Athenian theatre creations such as Medea, Clytemnestra and Phaedra should be played as drag roles; since they are so damning about women, they could only have evolved from and for a misogynist culture whose view of women no feminist could allow to pass without comment. Case writes: 'The feminist director might decide to cast a man as Medea, underscoring

patriarchal prejudices about ... jealousy and the ownership of children as a male preserve.'[47] If they are played by male actors, these characters are signalled as a certain type of cultural construct, but not necessarily emanating from a male-dominated culture. Theatrical cross-dressing occurs across a vast range of cultures and fulfils a number of different functions. It would be interesting to see a production which cast a known female impersonator (as distinct from a drag artiste) as Medea, supported by a female chorus so that a clear distinction could be made between the real women of the chorus and the half-woman, half-monster, Medea. Cross-gender casting might well draw attention to the issues of female 'oppression' in Greek society, the conflict between passionate and social contracts, and the gender ambiguity of Medea's attitudes and actions. But such experimentation would also attract interest in the self-conscious theatricality of the experiment - like Dr. Johnson's famous comment about women preaching and dogs walking on their hind legs, the audience might be amazed, not that it was done well, but that it was done at all.[48]

For Euripides' audience, the very idea of women appearing on stage with naked faces, known and fêted as actors of great tragic roles, would have seemed barbaric, at the least. In *Medea*, we are indeed shown a barbarian who makes her way through life by deceiving, by acting, and her fate, in this play, is to become even less human, more monstrous, than she had ever been shown before. Medea makes her own 'theatre' in that she invents her own rituals, her own 'showing and telling' of salient points. Her account of her exchanged oaths with Jason, the insistence on Aegeus's public (for it is witnessed by the chorus) swearing of his oath; her adoption of dual voice; her staged farewell to her children; the off-stage ritual of sacrifice in which she officiates; the establishment of the cult; her epiphany as semi-divine, and her prophesying of Jason's death - all these are moments of self-consciously engineered 'theatre'. Yet she must not appear to 'self-dramatise' since this would reduce her to Jason's view of her; an over-emotional woman who plays her female role for sympathy but lets histrionics get the better of her.

A modern audience, more conscious than an Athenian one of the constant, witnessing presence of the chorus, might well decide that we never do see the real face of Medea behind her mask

since she never addresses the audience solo. Unlike the soliloquies of native English theatre, the 'soliloquies' of Greek tragedy are overheard, and seen by the audience to be overheard and so witnessed, by the on-stage chorus. In *Medea*, it might be argued, Medea says nothing without awareness of its effect on her hearers; neither the chorus nor the audience can be certain of having accessed the inner space of Medea's mind. Insofar as the play elevates the female vice of deceit into an art form, yet allows its practitioner to escape into legend as an icon - monstrous yet magnificent - it may be seen to be a play which, all unwittingly, prefigures the twentieth-century phenomenon of the female 'star'.

NOTES

1 Rehm (1994), 97.

2 Notably, Golder (1996, 176), of the 1992 Almeida *Medea*: 'wooden...anguished behind clenched teeth in that peculiarly English way'.

3 McDonald, in Clauss & Johnston (1997), 297-9.

4 See Page, xxx-xxxvi, on 'Euripides and Neophron', and March in Powell (1990), 35.

5 Medea's story was indeed told in trilogy by Franz Grillparzer in *The Golden Fleece* (1822), a trilogy revived by the black actress Agnes Straub in 1933 as a protest against Nazi racism (Johnston, in Clauss & Johnston (1997), 4). The final part of Grillparzer's trilogy was adapted in 1983 by Barney Simon for a production which premiered at the Space Theatre in Cape Town, and then went to the Edinburgh Festival in 1983, and subsequently to the Riverside theatre in London, with Yvonne Bryceland playing Medea. This production used race-colour to signify Medea's otherness. (See Cordelia Oliver, *P&P*, October 1983)

6 See Johnston in Clauss & Johnston (1997, 3-5), McDonald (n.3, above), and Burian's and Macintosh's references to modern versions on stage and screen in Easterling (1997, 228-83, and 309-23). A performance history of *Medea* is being prepared by Edith Hall.

7 Cherubini's opera (premiered in Paris in 1797) had a French libretto by Francois Benoit Hoffman, and included passages of spoken dialogue which were subsequently set to music by Franz Lachner in 1854, these recitatives being used for most modern productions. Other versions were written by Marc-Antoine Charpentier (1693: *Médée*, libretto by Corneille), Giovanni Pacini (1796-1867), and Vincenzo Tomasini (1878-1950). Both Pacini's and Tomasini's versions end with Medea's suicide.

8 For analysis of these two films and another spirited defence of *A Dream of Passion*, which was widely panned by the critics, and dubbed by Paul Taylor in *Time Out Film Guide: 1989* 'a nightmare of pretension', see Mackinnon (1986), 146-61.

9 Golder (1996), 199.

10 'It is doubtful whether Medea had ever received such an astonishing apotheosis before' (Macintosh, in Easterling (1997), 314), and to judge from the reviews [see OUdb177], for those who were present, this was a moment of theatrical experience which film could not equal.

11 Kovacs, 286, and Knox (in Segal, 1983), 273. It is perhaps significant that this play shares with others of Euripides' plot-innovatory works (*Bacchae, Helen)* the final chorus tag, which is also used in *Andromache* and *Alcestis*, about the gods (and playwrights too, perhaps?) surprising men's expectations. Commenting on the use of this five line tailpiece at the end of the *Bacchae*, Seaford (257) dismisses it as an actor's interpolation in that play. Page (181) found these lines 'a little inapposite', and similarly assumed that they were 'likely to be included or suppressed at the discretion of the producer'. Since one is dealing here with uncertainties, might not the possibility that Euripides was re-using the lines in a wittily self-referential way be an acceptable hypothesis?

12 Knox (in Segal (1983), 27) points out that Euripides' audience might have had in mind his recent *Ajax*, but there is also, as Harrison's 1985 version suggests, a similarity to Heracles, another child-killing demi-human whose exploits and abilities are shown in a long cycle of events in which the protagonist touches the lives of many but moves on, if not unscathed, at least unvanquished. Like Medea, Euripides' Heracles finds refuge (and in his case, purification) in Athens. On Medea as 'heroic', see Boedeker in Clauss & Johnston (1997), 134 & 147.

13 Unless otherwise stated, all quotations in English are from Kovacs.

14 Barlow (1996), 37.

15 'Your greatest glory is not to be inferior to what God has made you, and the greatest glory of a woman is to be least talked about by men, whether they are praising you or criticising you'. (Thucydides' *The History of the Peloponnesian War* trs. Warner (1954), 151). This has been conventionally interpreted as a prescriptive admonition aimed solely at women but see Hardwick (1993) for qualification of this reading, and the suggestion that Pericles' real target is the ambitious and vying men who are contemplating advantageous marriages with war widows and orphans.

16 Williamson in Powell (1990), 16-31, and 18.

17 See: Hall in Easterling (1997, 121) on this speech as 'the most remarkable account of the second-class status of women to be found in ancient literature'; Gardner in McAuslan & Walcott (1996, 148-9) on suspicion of the new wife as a stranger in the *oikos*. On the peculiar problems Medea had as a foreign wife of a Greek, see Hall (1989, rep. 1991, 175-6). On marriage as the battle ground for the sexes and as site of female fulfilment, see Zeitlin (1996), 53-119, and 123-71.

18 Page, xi/xii.

19 Loraux (1987), 8-10, describes suicide as being, for the Greeks, the way of desperation and dishonour; the only way out for powerless women, and hence, not a man's choice. See, too, Loraux, ibid., 54, on Medea's plan to use the sword on her three enemies.

20 Knox in Segal (1983), 441-2, n.31 to 278.

21 Compare Vellacott's translation (1963, 46), and Kovac's (383) of lines 944-5:
Ia. malista, kai peisein ge doxazō sph' egō.
Me. eiper gunaikōv esti tōn allōn mia.
In contrast to the point I make about Medea using a 'male voice ' for line 945, Jeremy Brooks, in his translation for the 1986 Theatr Clwyd production, assigned this line to Jason (Brooks, 1986, 35).

22 Hall (1989, rep. 1991), 35 and 54.

23 Holst-Warhaft (1992), 50, in writing of women's laments for the dead in rural Greece, notes that the loss of husband, male relative or male child continues to involve lament for loss of status.

24 Rehm (1994), 105.

25 See Rehm (1994), 97, and Hall (1989, 1991), 175-6, and 176, n.54, on Patterson's (1981) thoughts on Athenian/foreign marriages.

26 See Hall (1989, 1991), 125, on ungoverned temper as a barbarian attribute.

27 See Williamson in Powell (1990), 18-22.

28 Again, an analogy with Lady Macbeth suggests itself, in her invocation: 'Come, you Spirits /That tend on mortal thoughts...' (*Macbeth*, I.v. 40-1)

29 Boedeker in Clauss & Johnston (1997), 127-48.

30 Barlow (1996), 45.

31 On the Chorus as the 'three ages of woman' and analysis of its stasimon speeches, see Hazel (1996), 223-6.

32 *P&P*, July 1992.

33 Goodman (1993), 228-30.

34 Harrison (1985), 370.

35 On Brendan Kennelly's version of *Medea* [OUdb172], which combines a political and a sexual-political reading, see Kennelly's own Preface to the play (1991, 6-8). Also, McDonald, in Clauss & Johnston (1997), 305-12.

36 Other productions of 1985/6 include Nancy Meckler's 1985 Leicester Haymarket Co. production [OUdb179], Maria Caldarone's March 1986 Gate Theatre production [OUdb174], the Toho Theatre Co. version directed by Ninagawa [OUdb177] at the Edinburgh Festival and the National Theatre.

37 Bacon (1995), 10.

38 The anecdote about Victorian ladies at a performance of the role of Cleopatra by Sarah Bernhardt ('How different, how very different from the home life of our own dear queen') may be apocryphal, but has the ring of popular opinion. The play may have been by an Englishman, but it was about a comfortingly alien and antique female person - a queen but no lady - and acted by a highly suspect, though much fêted, European actress. Perhaps this is a nearer comparison to the citizens of Athens watching *Medea, Hippolytus* or *Stheneboia* than might at first seem apparent. In 1898, in Paris, Sarah Bernhardt also played Medea.

39 Obviously the 'tragic heroine' of English theatre tradition is very different from the 'heroine' of Greek cults dealt with by Kearns in Blundell & Williamson (1998), 96-110.

40 Just (1989), 194.

41 The disputed section 1056-64 poses a problem for a director. The 'internal inconsistency' Kovacs (1994) spells out in his note (393, b) can be eliminated by judicious cutting of 1058: 'If they live with me in that other place, they will gladden you [my heart]'.

42 Just (1989, 156), quotes from Alexiou (1974), about the ritual stance of men who are pictured on funerary scenes on pottery: they 'usually enter from the right with right arms raised in a uniform gesture'. See, too, Stears in Blundell & Williamson (1998), 115.

43 See Loraux (1987, 12) on the sacrificing of males by men.

44 'We have to infer her inner tumult from her mask-like impassivity' (John Barber, 2/6/86); 'Mrs Jaffrey recalls a cultured product of the declining Raj...' (Martin Hoyle, *Financial Times*, 2/6/86); and, from the *Sunday Times* 8/6/86; 'Madhur Jaffrey's performance is well-bred and polite, all delicacy and restraint...the final scene, with Medea riding triumphant in her chariot, should actually be deeply uncomfortable. Here it looks merely odd, because what had gone before was never monstrous, only bizarre. Instead of a merciless barbarian, Jaffrey plays a refined Oriental with exquisite bearing and eloquent hands, a victim more than a predator'.

45 Even less appropriate was the reverse of the page in the programme advertising Jaffrey's books; it carried an entry form for a 'Win a £500 Holiday to Greece' competition.

46 The self-reflexive potential in the play can best be exploited in versions rather than translations, as has been done in, for example, the Dassin film *A Dream of Passion*, already cited, and Zofia Kalinska's solo performance piece *If I am Medea* (1997) [OUdb864].

47 Case (1988), 15 & 19. At the Lambeth Gay Arts Festival in 1986, Gag Theatre company offered a production of *Medea*. Outside the U.K., a gay theatre group in Seattle did a cross-dressed version in 1995 (Johnston, in Clauss & Johnston (1997), 4).

48 There was, perhaps, an element of this wonder in certain responses to Ninagawa's 1986 production, with one reviewer commenting, for example, on the 'astonishing physical versatility' (*P&P*, November 1987, Giles Gordon) of a male actor as Medea (Mikijiro Hira, later replaced by Takusaburo Arashi). However, in general, it was the theatrical effect of the whole spectacle which attracted critical acclaim.

CHAPTER 4

DANGEROUS WOMEN

This chapter deals with the power of sex: the rule of golden but terrible Aphrodite over women and men. There are introductory sections on ancient Greek male perceptions of female sex roles, and on the construction in Greek literature of models of female sexuality, but the greater part of the chapter consists of case studies of plays about two women (Phaedra and Pasiphaë) who, according to their portrayal in Greek myth and drama, are led by their desire - that is, by the power of Aphrodite - into behaviour which is unacceptable or transgressive of the moral codes of the cultures in which they are sited by male narrators.

The case study of portrayals of Phaedra's possession by Aphrodite, and consequent use of what power she has, ranges over versions and performances of her story across a number of genres, from Euripides to the present day. The purpose of this case study is to contrast Euripides' 'reformed' Phaedra in the extant *Hippolytus* with subsequent accounts of her, which, from Seneca onwards, have placed the blame on the human woman more than on the goddess. Whereas the later Phaedra-type is reprehensible, Euripides' is a tragic victim of the power of Aphrodite.

The second, shorter, case study is of the story of Phaedra's mother, Pasiphaë, and her sexual desire for the bull dedicated to Poseidon. In this section of the chapter, the text under study is a modern retelling of the myth by Geoff Gillham, a writer-director in TIE. What is at issue for Gillham is the way that complex social problems (what he might describe metaphorically as 'monsters and mazes') are the product of human - and specifically, in this case, male -

construction. In the first half of his play, *Getting To It*, Gillham presents a paradigm of how male fear, frustration and suppressed desire displaces guilt on to the female.

Both the ancient and the modern texts under special review, Euripides' *Hippolytus* and Gillham's *Getting To It*, give example of male writers re-creating women who had been 'constructed' by earlier male myth-makers to bear a burden of social guilt. In the case of Euripides' extant play of *Hippolytus*, it seems that, in his revision of the first version, he was in fact reconstructing his own account of Phaedra. Versions across modern genres show that (as was the case with the Greek playwrights) adaptors choose which elements of the various accounts of each story to emphasise and which to reject: whether to show a woman capable of exerting free-will above desire, or whether to show her as a helpless pawn of divine or human-male power; whether to represent the actions she consequently takes as reprehensible or as pardonable to their viewing or reading audience; and whether the woman is in effect the lead role, or is subordinate to another concern of the plot. This chapter also proposes a parallel between two culturally very different male playwrights in their questionings of a myth concerning a woman's use of power within her *oikos* while under the influence of the exterior power of an overwhelming desire.

Greek male problems with female sex roles

> But you women are so far gone in folly that if all is well in bed you think you have everything, while if some misfortune in that domain occurs you regard as hateful your best and truest interests. Mortals ought to beget children from some other source, and there should be no female sex. Then mankind would have no trouble.
>
> (*Medea*, 569-75, Kovacs, 345)

Putting Medea's extreme reaction down to jealousy alone, Jason generalises all 'Trouble With Women' as arising from sex. What Jason says, whether from exasperation with one woman or with the whole gender, is an expression of misogyny later to be taken to grotesque lengths by Hippolytus. Simplistic reception of such passages, as well as of the subject matter of some of his plays, has supported the accusations of misogyny made against Euripides, but Pomeroy (1975, rep. 1994, 105) wisely cautions that: 'one ought not to attribute to a playwright the remarks of

his characters', and later (107), writes: 'I can scarcely believe that so subtle a dramatist as Euripides, who called into question traditional Athenian beliefs and prejudices ... would have intended his audience simply to accept [that is, in the sense of agreeing with or taking as a truth universally acknowledged by the playwright] the misogynist maxims' of, for example, Hippolytus or Jason.[1] Simon Goldhill, who takes the *Hippolytus* as a case study in a chapter on 'Sexuality and difference', points to Hippolytus's speech against women as marking 'the difficulty of reading particularly an explicit misogynist statement in such a dramatic text as a transparent means to either Euripides' or a Greek audience's view'.[2]

With some certitude, we can say that the account of female sexuality to be found in ancient Greek drama is a male construct, but very often it is *explicitly presented* as a male construct; that is, the male playwright shows male characters of myth giving their personal, individualised comments on or explanations for what they perceive women to be. Thus, Euripides reveals Jason's impatience with Medea as arising from his diminished attraction to her, as well as from an ageing adventurer's desire to marry into secure respectability and beget legitimate heirs by a Greek, not a barbarian, woman. As has been noted in the chapter on *Medea*, this desire would not seem unreasonable, after Pericles' citizenship laws of 451, to an Athenian audience. For the audiences of Euripides' plays, marriage had a dual function: it was for the getting of legitimate heirs and for the forging of bonds of *philia*. Sexual pleasure, either male or female, was not a primary issue in this social contract.

Hippolytus's tirade at 616-68 is, in contrast to Jason's, a general, depersonalised attack against women, triggered by the Nurse's disastrous, though well-intentioned, attempt at pimping; it may be interpreted as the pious acerbity of the devotee of Artemis or the overzealous protestation of a woman-hater, but in either case, it reveals more about the dynamics of the Hippolytus myth than about Phaedra, the Nurse, or 'real' women, either within or beyond the world of the play.

Setting aside the fact that both Hippolytus's protest to Zeus ('Zeus, why did you settle women in the sun's light as counterfeit, an evil for human beings?'[3]) and Jason's condemnation of female

nature are from plays in which Greek men are goaded into extreme reactions by the behaviour of non-Greek women (if we accept that Cretan was, in the fifth century, something other than perfect Greek), these are sentiments which have roots in the myth about Pandora, expounded by Hesiod in *Works and Days* and *Theogony*. Before the creation of woman, there was a time of harmony between gods and men: 'a golden time', as Barbara Smith expresses it, with the restrained irony of reportage:

> at the beginning of Zeus's reign when there were no women and men were still allowed to sit at the table of the gods and share a meal with them. [4]

However, Hesiod's account in *Works and Days* (52-105) of the Pandora myth should perhaps not be read primarily as a castigation of woman, but as indicative of the extent to which Zeus is angered by Prometheus's two attempts to outwit him. As Prometheus was inventive in his trickery, so is Zeus in his punishment: since Prometheus's second attempt to best Zeus would have been to the benefit of all mankind, so Zeus's punishment plagues all mankind in that it radically alters its very means of procreation and preservation.

It is possible that Hesiod's hostility to women, expressed both in his account of the Pandora myth and in his advice on marriage, is traceable to his personal circumstances and attitudes, but there are later instances of writers (Semonides of Amorgos, in the seventh century, with his poem about types of women, for example) who are also exercised in their minds about the categorising of women, and, while recognising them as a necessity for the production of young, feel that things might have been better organised. Loraux makes the point that 'subsequent tradition did not modify Hesiod's account in any way [...] woman is Zeus's creation, and the *genus gynaikon,* in its cohesion, threatens the unity of a masculine society'.[5] It is not simply that one woman has been created but that she will be the mother of all women, and the race of womankind - both human and not *anthropoi* - will henceforward be an unassimilable, unstable, unaccountable presence in the world of men.

In the myth of Pandora, as in the Judaic myth of the Garden of Eden, the creation of the female is to be man's undoing since woman brings with her the fatal weakness of curiosity - or, to use a

feminist interpretation, a desire for knowledge. However, whereas the loving Jehovah provides Eve, on request, as a helpmate for Adam, Pandora is a liability. By giving to Epimetheus the All-gift (Pandora and her pithos, which is indeed all good and all bad things in one package), Zeus punishes all mankind for Prometheus's attempts at outwitting the gods. Thus, whereas in Judaeo-Christian theology man is in part responsible for his own fall from grace, having asked for Eve in the first place, and then having succumbed to her temptation to disobedience, in Greek mythology the onus for letting evils loose into the world is placed squarely on the shoulders of the woman whom the gods have, between them, created. According to Hesiod, then, woman was created to punish and curb mankind.

The Greek physicians' view of woman as a 'defective kind of human',[6] with inverted sex organs and insufficient vital heat to produce semen, supported the belief that the female body was intrinsically ill-designed. If, as some physicians thought, menstrual blood was the female seed, the most (in modern terms) normal menstrual patterns must have seemed wasteful and indicative of failure of attempts to conceive. The whole business of conception, pregancy and birth was, surely, deeply mysterious and complicated, and it is not surprising that not one but at least four goddesses had to be invoked on the diverse areas of chastity, sexual activity, marriage, fertility and childbirth. Even if she was assumed to be simply the seed-bed and nurturing-place for the man's seed, as Apollo asserts in *The Eumenides*,[7] the woman was at best, as a specimen of humankind, something of a muddle.

Greek male (literary) construction of female sexuality

Of the goddesses who were responsible for areas of female sex-related activities - Artemis, Hera, Demeter, Aphrodite - arguably the most dangerous to men was Aphrodite, though Artemis, as guardian of women's state of chaste 'wildness', was also a considerable force to be reckoned with. Aphrodite could extend her power over men and women, and though she is described by Homer in the *Iliad* as 'golden' (Book 5, 491) and 'smiling' (Book 14, 254), in Athenian tragedy she features as 'great', 'powerful' or even 'terrible', in the sense of 'awe-inspiring'. She was powerful

in that she was capable of manipulating the passions even of noble and normally reasonable people, and 'terrible' because of the unpredictable ferocity of her own allegiances and jealousies. In Aristophanic comedy, there is evidence of an attempt to channel or defuse, through humour, the dangers of Aphrodite's exercise of power over women: in *Lysistrata*, sex-starved men are comically vulnerable to role-reversing women; in *Ecclesiazusae* (1049-97), old women who have no reason to want sex for purposes of procreation are shown as grotesquely rapacious, and in *Thesmophoriazusae*, although women's sexual appetites are less dealt with than their weakness for wine, they are still referred to, but humorously. Similarly, through ritual, within the safety of the Thesmophoria, or the female rites at the Dionysia, or at Eleusis, women could play at promiscuity, at adultery, with no harm done to their reputation. But the sexual desire Aphrodite arouses in those she uses as pawns or punishes as victims is not the stuff of comedy but of tragedy.

Greek male (literary) construction of female sexuality

The ideal wife would have the looks of Aphrodite but the chastity of Artemis. Even though devoted to her husband, she would not be jealous or possessive, accepting that what he did outside the *oikos* - indeed, beyond the women's quarters - was no concern of hers. The truly loving wife would exhibit none of the usual marks of Aphrodite's rule. In comedy, women are represented as having voracious appetites for food, drink and sex. The caricature of female folly and women's domination by appetite is presented as humorous, and female attempts to use physical power, ludicrous. The shrew, the nag, the sexually demanding wife, the Amazonian husband-beater are staples of comedy in male-controlled theatre since, by deliberate use of role reversal and re-assertion, comedy exorcises male fears of loss of masculinity.[8] It is a paradox of the comedy/tragedy opposition that, because Old Comedy seems to be sited in the actual world of contemporary society, when it presents fantastic situations they are consequently funny; whereas tragedy, though apparently dealing with an unreal (mythical) world, presents events as (horrifically) 'real'. In tragedy, a woman's sexuality is shown to be dangerous.

A woman expressing her sexual desire may signal the malfunctioning of a relationship - usually marriage - which is predicated on the proper control and channelling of sexual appetite and activity for the social good. The danger of women under the control of Aphrodite is less that they may destroy themselves, since women are, after all, only women, but that they will destroy their husbands, lovers, sons or households while the balance of their minds is disturbed by the demands of their bodies and emotions. Although a number of female characters of the tragedies exhibit sexual possession or jealousy - Medea, for example, and Clytemnestra - the character most representative of possession by Aphrodite is Phaedra. In the extant *Hippolytus* play, Euripides subverts expectations about the type of the (tragic) over-sexed woman. As a victim of Aphrodite's power, Phaedra deserves pity, though as one who abuses the limited power she has, she will be blamed by the play's community of Troezen for turning Theseus against his son, even though the Athenian audience might consider her moral responsibility has been diminished by the goddess's take-over.

Euripides' Phaedra

The Phaedra-type to whom Mnesilochus and Mica in *Thesmophoriazusae* refer (546-50) was perhaps that which Euripides used in his earlier play, in which Phaedra attempts to seduce Hippolytus herself.[9] This version had obviously followed an established line of the myth which saw Hippolytus as an innocent tragic hero and Phaedra the female tragic 'agent'. In this reading of the story, Phaedra, deceitful and sexually rapacious, is represented as following the dictates of her desire, although she knows her lust offends both against social taboos (since Hippolytus is her step-son) and against divine will (since Hippolytus is dedicated to Artemis). The story of the married woman who lusts for, attempts to seduce and finally destroys by her false accusations a young, chaste man, appears in the myth of many cultures: Robert Graves instances in Greek myth the stories of Biadice and Phrixus, Anteia (Stheneboea in Euripides' play) and Bellerophon, Cretheis and Peleus, and Phylonome and Tenes, in addition to Phaedra and Hippolytus.[10] When Euripides revised his play (in 428), he was to make Phaedra so obviously the pawn of a vindictive, slighted (female) goddess that the sympathy of the first half of the play shifts in her

favour, and Hippolytus's reaction, significantly, focuses on the nature of women in general and of the Nurse in particular. Only after her death does Hippolytus, in self-defence in reply to her accusation, begin, in a necessarily veiled way, to talk about Phaedra's guilt.

Aphrodite's introductory speech makes it clear that, sorry as she may be for Phaedra (who has *not,* in Euripides' version of the story, slighted or offended her), the woman will be sacrificed in order to destroy the man who has chosen Artemis to the exclusion of all others. Hippolytus's salutation to Artemis at his first entry does have the sound of self-confidence, but not (unless the actor brings this aspect out) of arrogance. His rejection of the servant's advice to pay at least some courteous lip-service to Aphrodite is brusque, but not unreasonable; the devotee of the goddess of chastity can hardly have much to say in commendation of the goddess of sex.[11] If there is a villainess in the first part of the play, it is Aphrodite, not Phaedra. Aphrodite foretells the outcome of her manipulation of Phaedra's passion: it will end with Theseus activating one of the death-curses granted him by Poseidon. What the goddess does not spell out is Phaedra's part in accusing Hippolytus; she says that *she* will reveal the matter to Theseus, 'and all will be known'. In the event, Phaedra, whose conversation with the nurse and obvious agonies of mind have shown her to be honourable, although confused and distraught to find her passion out of the control of her will, turns into the kind of stereotypically wicked woman against whom Hippolytus has inveighed. In her accusation of him she lies, and, taking what might be seen to be the womanly, coward's way out, suicide, dies, as women were typically represented in tragedy as doing, by hanging herself - not for her the assumption of the man's weapon, the phallic blade, in death.[12]

Phaedra's initial conversation with the Nurse (198-249), in the presence of the chorus, shows her mental distraction, which is not surprising in one who has eaten nothing for three days. In her almost hallucinatory evocation of herself riding, running freely on the mountains or plains, she envisages herself as the image of Artemis, to whom Hippolytus is dedicated, but that vision sounds pitiful coming from the enfeebled figure which has had to be carried or assisted from the women's quarters. Her beautiful arms and hands are useless for curbing a horse or throwing

lances; though she throws off her headcovering - a symbol of female domestication - there is something slightly ludicrous, certainly pathetic, in the thought of this aristocratic hot-house plant (or its fifth-century Athenian equivalent) attempting to turn Amazon to be nearer her beloved's idea of perfect woman.

The audience of *Hippolytus* knows, as Phaedra does not, that the terrible obsessional affliction which is destroying her mental stability is god-induced. The stichomythic dialogue which is to reveal her infatuation starts and finishes with the naming of Hippolytus, but in both instances it is the Nurse, not the queen, who does actually name him. Her reaction to the Nurse's naming of him: 'You've destroyed me, dear nurse, and by the gods I beg you to be silent about this man from now on' (311-12), signals the danger of putting into words things which had better never have been thought or felt, much less said. As Goldhill points out, the play is centrally concerned with the disjunction between language and mental or emotional processes, and challenges, by its thematic preoccupation with 'misreading', the possibility of stability of discourse.[13] At crucial points in the play, communications are thwarted, motives mistaken, wrong assumptions and decisions made on the basis of misinterpreted or misleading evidence. Phaedra's Nurse, like Juliet's, lacks her mistress's nobility, gives well-meaning but base advice, and acts shamelessly, although from loving motives; Hippolytus reads only the sexual need from the Nurse's message, not her mistress's desperate agony of mind; Theseus has to believe the worst of one of the two people he loves best, and makes the wrong choice.

Only the Chorus can see, as the action proceeds, the tragic potential of wrong responses, and the chorus, though composed of young women of Troezen, speaks on behalf of the audience. Though the audience knows that disaster is inevitable, it can see that both women in the *agon* of the first episode are trying to do what seems right to them. Phaedra is not a Hellene, but she is royal; she has a sense of honour, and her instinct is to kill herself and end her dilemma. Her speech to the chorus centres on the idea that women are what they are seen and said to be: they are the 'constructs' of the society in which they live. The lines (384-90) include the mention of leisure and the suggestion of female delight in gossip, and may distinguish between two

meanings of 'shame' - what the individual feels about his own behaviour (conscience?) and what he feels when that behaviour is known and condemned by public opinion.[14] Later in the speech, Phaedra says: 'I knew that I was a woman, an object of hatred to all!' - the implication being that the world is predisposed to see as shameful any behaviour which brings a woman to its attention, and that her own awareness of shame was enough to persuade her that the honourable course of action was suicide. Dying without articulating her desire in words seems to her the way 'to devise good from what's disgraceful', as Phaedra says (331). Further, she knows that 'when disgraceful things seem fine to the noble, very much will they seem good to the base' (411-12), so women of rank have a responsibility to set a good example to others. She hates, she says, women who do lip-service to chastity and are unfaithful to their husbands. Significantly, she invokes Aphrodite not Artemis when she says this since she is not objecting (as Hippolytus does) to sexual activity, but sexual activity with the wrong, the forbidden partner. Phaedra, not knowing that she is touched by Aphrodite, sees herself as the inheritrix of the curse on her mother, Pasiphaë, whom Poseidon used as a pawn to punish Minos, and on Ariadne, 'bride of Dionysus'. The tainted 'fame' of these members of her family (the Cretan royal family), she suggests, she is bound to inherit unless she takes evasive action, and her resolution not to be reflected by Time in the mirror of infamy is applauded by the Chorus's aphorism that 'Everywhere moderation is a fine thing and harvests a good reputation among mortals!' (431-2).

Until the point that she entrusts her secret to the Nurse and allows the Nurse to take an active part in finding a solution, Phaedra, in Euripides's second version, is essentially a tragic figure. Unlike Pasiphaë in Euripides' *Cretans*,[15] she does not blame others for her obsession: the chorus has reviewed possible reasons for her desperate state, when, in their first ode, they suggest possession by a slighted god or jealousy over some affair of Theseus's as being a cause. The discussion of two kinds of 'shame' at 385-7 (or even, as Kovacs suggests, 'pleasure'), which shows Phaedra's acute awareness of the fact that one word will not adequately serve different purposes, may have prompted the audience's memory of a similar distinguishing between meanings made in a Euripides play on a similar theme just the year before, when Bellerophon, after Stheneboea's attempt to seduce him, speaks of 'two kinds of love: one is our worst enemy

and leads to death, while the other, which tends to self-restraint and virtue, is the love coveted by men among whom I wish to belong myself. So I consider even death if I may keep my self-restraint'.[16] And this, indeed, had been Phaedra's resolve.

But Phaedra's suicide alone would not have achieved Aphrodite's end: to destroy Hippolytus's reputation and life. In Euripides' extant version of the play, it may seem that there is inconsistency between the Phaedra who would choose death rather than dishonour and the Phaedra who, at point of death, falsely accuses an innocent man. The first version Phaedra, crazed beyond decency and reason by lust, would have been believable as capable of using stereotypically womanish deceitful words in a spirit of vengeful malice. The second Phaedra is described by Artemis herself as being possessed of a kind of nobility (1301), and is put in context by the goddess as just another of Aphrodite's unfortunate pawns.

The explanation for what appears in Phaedra to be unexpected vindictiveness in writing the letter of accusation is found in her exchanges with the Nurse and the Chorus before her final exit: though she has overheard Hippolytus say that he was tricked into swearing to silence, she does not believe that he will keep his word since her own Nurse, whom she trusted with her terrible secret, has failed to keep silence though under just such an oath. As the trust which she had put in the Nurse was great, so must be Phaedra's anger at its betrayal. Her curse (682-4), uttered against the person she had thought loved her, and in whom she had placed absolute trust, prefigures Theseus's curse against Hippolytus, since both call on gods with whom the speaker claims kinship, and both invoke death as a punishment for dishonourable behaviour. It is, indeed, dishonour which is the theme of this, Phaedra's final, and in terms of character, transitional scene. As in her speech to the chorus after the revelation of her obsession, Phaedra is concerned primarily to preserve her good name, as an inheritance for her sons and so as not to dishonour her familial home, Crete. The chorus's lyric, picturing the 'white-winged Cretan ship' bringing the princess 'through the roaring sea waves of the deep' (752-5), delicately reminds the audience that Phaedra is, after all, not an Athenian, and tips the balance of sympathy towards the two male victims of Aphrodite's anger, Hippolytus and Theseus himself. The letter of accusation

is a pre-emptive strike to destroy Hippolytus's credibility so that he cannot destroy Phaedra's, and her children's, reputations. Like Medea, Phaedra suggests a male attitude to the prospect of an enemy's laughter; Hippolytus will not be allowed to gloat, even in secrecy, at her end, and 'in common with me he will learn to be moderate' (730-1) - which gives voice to a feeling the audience may have nursed, that Hippolytus's extremity of chastity is as much a sign of possession by, rather than devotion to, a god as is Phaedra's extremity of desire.

It is, of course, abseiling on cobwebs to attempt to guess about Euripides' first version of the Phaedra/Hippolytus story. In any case, it would seem from the comments in *Thesmophoriazusae* and *The Frogs*[17] that, despite any argument that may be made for Phaedra II's essential nobility, it was the titillating sexual appetite of the mythical character which audiences remembered, whether from an earlier complete version or from the prizewinning *Hippolytus* of 428 with its 'reformed' Phaedra. The shock-attraction, or titillation, of the story about a mature woman who turns sexually predatory over a younger man may, for a male audience in any age, have to do with the perennial fantasy of the dominatrix. There may, too, be an element of comedy about the situation since the rampant woman is actually ridiculous - she cannot rape and so is sexually no real danger to any man, but is presented as being in a state of constant and frustrated arousal. But in the extant *Hippolytus*, such a woman is presented, not as a figure of fun, but of pathos; even, later, of nobility It seems that Euripides saw no problem in elevating the type to a figure appropriate to tragedy, but in such a setting the female sexual predator ceases to be ludicrous and becomes dangerous. The woman who is seeking or is open to seduction is a danger to the stability of the household, and the danger is intensified if, having been denied satisfaction or rendered jealous, she decides to take action in non-sexual areas, using what are, to Athenian perception, the weapons of her sex: deceit and verbal dexterity. Phaedra's accusation of Hippolytus may thus be seen in terms of her rape of his honour, so transforming her from the potentially tragic figure of the first part of the play to a woman made dangerous to men by her frustration, anger and fear. A woman may not have the physical power to destroy a man's body, but she does have the power to destroy his good name and his credibility, even with respect to his vaunted virtue or abilities.

There are, then, a number of points over which modern interpreters of Euripides' story of Phaedra might need to pause, and consider the tensions which occur when two cultures touch. First there are Euripides' answers in *Hippolytus* to those issues signalled above as being common to recreations of the myths of Phaedra and Pasiphaë: does the woman have any choice in her situation or is she dominated by external forces? are her consequent actions to be represented to an audience as reprehensible or pardonable? is she, in fact, the most important figure in this tragedy, or does she, rather, serve a larger theme? In addition to the answers which a director decides Euripides chose, there are other issues. How can a director signal to a modern audience the importance of Phaedra's ambiguous status as both foreigner and queen in the world of her husband's court? How important is it, a director might ask, that her love was, in Athenian eyes, incestuous and taboo because potentially threatening to the *oikos*, when to a modern audience it seems merely adulterous, not incestuous, since there is no blood link between the two? Then there is the question of Hippolytus: does Euripides present him as admirable and innocent, or as a kind of religious narcissist? To what extent is Theseus at fault in believing his wife above his son? And how are the gods of the play to be represented? Can they simply be shown as manifestations of mental states? Successive centuries have responded in different ways to these questions which are implicit in Euripides' recreation of the story in *Hippolytus*.

Reconstructions of Phaedra: Versions, Readings and Translations

Both of Euripides' two readings of Phaedra's part in the story are of interest to twentieth-century audiences, although the 'Stheneboea-type' first version reading (as far as we can guess at it) has been mediated by subsequent writers; notably, Seneca and Racine. It is, perhaps, not surprising that this version of Phaedra should have been privileged, because it allows scenes between Phaedra and Hippolytus, and between Phaedra and Theseus. An actor of either gender would appreciate the dramatic potential of such encounters.

Seneca set the action in Athens, not Troezen, cut out the personal appearances by Aphrodite and Artemis (Venus and Diana), let Phaedra approach Hippolytus personally, and, when repulsed, accuse him verbally to Theseus, but at the Nurse's suggestion.[18] Seneca also elaborated the account of Hippolytus's death with sadistic relish; cut Hippolytus's on-stage death-scene and reconciliation with Theseus, but inserted a section in which Theseus rebuilds his son's body from the fragments brought on stage.[19] Phaedra, who outlives Hippolytus, kills herself, on-stage, with Hippolytus's sword. With regard to Seneca's version of Phaedra, it may be said that in spite of the lessening of her guilt in the accusation against Hippolytus because of the nurse's part in the scheme, Seneca's Phaedra is more of a misogynist's picture than is Euripides'. She is only the pawn of a goddess in that she blames love (Venus) for her situation. Certainly she has much more awareness of being the daughter of a tainted house - and that house, one which Venus hates, so that:

> Love lies not lightly
> On any daughter of the house of Minos;
> We know no love that is not bound to sin.[20]

The play is significantly named after her, not after Hippolytus, and she is awarded the tragic hero's death by sword. She is shown as dangerous because of her lust and her readiness to make opportunity serve her needs - the rumour of the unlikelihood of Theseus's return from the land of the dead is enough for her to attempt a seduction which a possible future marriage might validate; when left with Hippolytus's sword in her hands she uses it as a weapon against him; she trades upon Theseus's love for her to make him believe her slander. This Phaedra, the devious sex-monster, crazed by desire, is the one who has most frequently been translated on to the modern stage.

Racine cut the chorus altogether as well as the goddesses, and in his preface to *Phaedra*, explained that he has 'been at pains to make her slightly less odious than in the tragedies of the ancients, where she resolves of her own accord to accuse Hippolytus' (this is not true of Seneca's version, as has been indicated).[21] Racine gave the false accusation to the nurse, Oenone, and allowed Phaedra a scene (IV. iv.) where she re-enters, intending to set the record straight, but on discovering from Oenone that Hippolytus loves Aricia, is overcome by jealousy and allows

Theseus's curse to take effect. The introduction of a love-interest for Hippolytus - Aricia, the sole survivor of the usurped royal family of Athens and so Theseus's enemy/victim - is, Racine said, in order to supply Hippolytus with a weakness 'which would make him slightly guilty towards his father', thus avoiding the blame of 'the ancients [who] reproached Euripides with having portrayed him as a sage free from any imperfection. As a result, the young prince's death caused more indignation than pity'.[22] Racine here gave his debt to the classical world double expression; while he set up the opinions of 'the ancients' as being of prime importance, he nonetheless felt entirely justified by late seventeenth-century notions of 'classical' propriety in editing Euripides and translating his play into one acceptable to an audience which valued grand passions above authenticity. His reading of the myth selects and 'improves', to produce a theatrical piece which had neither the (as he perceived it) apparent injustice of Euripides' original nor the brutality of Seneca's reading. It scarcely needs to be said that Seneca's and Racine's versions reveal a good deal about (respectively) first-century Roman and seventeenth-century French theatre through their response to Euripides' original, and that both versions are part of that well established tradition of writing for theatre which allows myth and history to be reworked, selectively, by dramatists.

It is perhaps because her story shows her as less proactive, less 'theatrical', a pawn rather than a villainous seductress, that Euripides' 'reformed' Phaedra of the extant text has not attracted translation into version or 'imitation' in the way that Seneca's has. A Phaedra who is represented as retaining an element of free-will, and thus, responsibility for her actions, and who is also rendered as a more centrally important character because she is shown in *agon* with Hippolytus and Theseus, is dramatically more attractive than the wretched pawn of Aphrodite. She can be shown as a strong woman rather than merely as a victim. Modern audiences need to be shown that Euripides' *Hippolytus* is not just the tragedy of Phaedra, but is, more complexly, the tragedy of Theseus and Hippolytus, which raises issues about man/god(dess) relations.

Whether following a Senecan or a Euripidean line, whether called after Phaedra or after Hippolytus, both versions and productions of translated texts have resonances for modern

audiences, who can still recognise the destructive potential of erotic obsession. Versions across a number of genres over the last thirty-five years have accentuated different aspects of the story, and these variations deserve some attention before considering productions of translations of Euripides' play.

Dassin's *Phaedra*: modernising the myth

The myth's additional complications of the 'Potiphar's wife' theme are: Hippolytus is Phaedra's stepson, and though not a blood relative, closely related enough for the suggestion of incest to be an issue; as wife of the king, Phaedra is in a position of authority over the young man; Hippolytus is dedicated to chastity; and the gods are involved to the extent that it might be said that the story is almost more about theomachy than about an ordinary, every-day royal family. With the exception of a version in historical novel form - Mary Renault's (1962) *The Bull From the Sea*[23] - versions in the 1960s and 1970s either eliminated the gods or adapted them.

An example of the way one modern 'translator' shifted genre and setting for the myth is Jules Dassin's 1961 film, *Phaedra*, which starred Melina Mercouri and Anthony Perkins. It was set in modern Greece, Paris and London, and the Athenian royal *oikos* was converted into the household of a Greek shipping magnate. The gods figured only in the form of statues, which emblematised Hippolytus/Alexis's devotion to art (against the wishes of his father), as well as the ancient nature of the story. However, Artemis and Aphrodite were strongly implied by the imagery of water and fire, and by the psychological traits which dominate Phaedra and Alexis. (Indeed, unless Hippolytus is translated, in a modern context, into a Catholic priest with a penchant for hunting, it might be difficult to decide how to register in a modern realistic setting the gods whose roles in the play are so crucial.) In Dassin's film, Poseidon is, perhaps, more obviously the protector of Theseus/Thanos, because of the character's reliance on the sea for his wealth and status, than he is of Theseus in Euripides' play. (Indeed, there seems a slight sense of surprise in Theseus's exclamation 'Poseidon ... you truly are my father after all', at 1169-70.) However, it is clearly impossible to realise ancient deities in what, one critic contests, is essentially a bourgeois melodrama.[24]

Notable emendations to the myth in this film are the consummated affair between Phaedra and Alexis/Hippolytus and the importation from Racine of a fiancée for Alexis. The incest taboo is replaced by adultery between an older woman and a young man, with Phaedra's jealousy over her young lover's engagement as another manifestation of the power of Aphrodite. As a recreation of a great Greek tragedy, the film was deemed to have failed.[25] A translation which sought for relevances and similarities simplified characterisation, and in the spelling out of 'how like us were the ancient Greeks', a battle of superhuman wills was reduced to an attractively sexy and poignant vehicle for two film actors. In *Never on a Sunday*, just the year before *Phaedra*, Melina Mercouri had presented the reverse to that film's obverse: the power of sex to enhance life and to redeem. It was in part because of her reputation and her performance in that earlier film that Mercouri was able to make her Phaedra the tragic heroine of a domestic drama, in a way that, clearly, Euripides' character could not be. Coming as they did at the start of a decade which was later to be viewed as the era of Flower Power, with its message 'Make love, not war', these two films, with their proudly Greek star, can also be seen as expressing in a new culture the power of the ancient Greek sex goddess, Aphrodite.

Phaedra Britannica: re-discovering a social structure

In a preface to the 1976 third edition of his play *Phaedra Britannica* (1975), Tony Harrison comments that 'When a play becomes a 'vehicle' only, the greater part of it has died'. He had in mind the responses of Jean-Louis Barrault in 1944 and Roland Barthes in 1957 to Racine's *Phèdre*, and their feeling that the play was in danger of being destroyed by being performed only as a vehicle for a star. It was in order to resuscitate Racine's *Phèdre* that Harrison attempted to 'rediscover a *social* structure which makes the tensions and polarities of the play significant again'.[26] The line which Harrison took to inform his transplantation of the play from neo-classical France to pre-Mutiny British Raj India is the description in I.i. 36. of Phaedra as 'La fille de Minos et de Pasiphaë'. 'Minos', Harrison felt, stands for the rigidly law-dealing, socially repressive, male British value system; 'Pasiphaë' for the female, transgressive, sexually joyous

and exploratory, and essentially alien system, not totally identified with, but attracted to, India and its gods.

The equivalence allowed Harrison to explore Imperialism as a counterpoint to the theme of sexual colonisation and exploitation.[27] In his view, 'The British projected their own suppressed nature on to the continent they subdued, personifying a destructive INDIA, devastating to those who gave in to its powers, who were seduced by its nakedly obvious allure'.[28] The degree to which that seduction has already begun is expressed in the play by the revelation of boundaries crossed and distinctions subverted: Thomas Theophilus/Hippolytus is half-Indian, son of the Governor/Theseus's Rajput wife; the Governor is absent at the start of the play because he is on one of his forays in 'native dress ... beyond the frontier'; Phaedra's mother (the Pasiphaë of myth) went 'beyond the frontiers of appetite' in her sexual adventures:

> Mother! Driven by the dark god's spite
> beyond the frontiers of appetite.
> A judge's wife! Obscene! Bestialities
> Hindoos might sculpture on a temple frieze![29]

and Phaedra sees herself in the grip of the same dark gods of India, and even goes to the lengths of having offerings made to them - 'Siva, Kali, Krishna ... that shaped stone!' - in an effort to free herself from occupation by the obsession with her step-son. In this version, the taboos are more to do with race and social status than with incest or adultery: there is, of course, no blood relationship between Phaedra and Theophilus, and though she recalls falling in love with him on first sight on her wedding day, she does not approach him with an attempt at seduction until the news of her husband's supposed death is brought.

Again and again, Phaedra blames the gods of India for their pursuit and degradation of her family, and their causing her father (who was, like Minos, a judge), to be shamed by the behaviour of his wife and daughters. The images of hunting and of monsters rise naturally from the setting, and provide a sense of the dangerous, sexually-charged mythical background to the action. Against such monsters as the possessed Phaedra and the promiscuous Thesus/Governor,

the restrained, 'correct' love of Theophilus for Lilamani stands little chance of survival. His silence in the face of the accusation of rape (made, as in Racine, by the Nurse/Aya) is because of a sense of propriety, of what is fitting to say about the Memsahib to the Governor, but this propriety holds his tongue as strongly as an oath made before the gods. While his very name indicates that he is god-loving/fearing, Theophilus is ruled, neither by Indian nor British gods, and so occupies a third area of devotion as Hippolytus does in his worship of Artemis to the exclusion of Aphrodite or Poseidon.

The production at the Old Vic by the National Theatre company, with John Dexter directing and Diana Rigg as the Memsahib/Phaedra, drew critical praise.[30] The translation from rhyming alexandrine into rhyming heroic couplets, and the transposition of the story from French 'ancient Greece' to Victorian India were recognised as both audacious and successful, and Harrison was seen to have found a potent equivalent for the power of Aphrodite and the tragic potential in the transgression of social boundaries or taboos. (Moreover, after this production, the National Theatre was to come to pride itself on providing, in translated versions, the work of European and ancient and modern world theatre writers for a British audience.[31])

How to deal with the gods?

In relation to this issue, it is relevant to consider two examples of versions of the Hippolytus/Phaedra story which, although first performed on *other* than English stages, give evidence of two very different responses to the debate about divine causation versus free will, and consequent directorial problems about representing the gods. The two examples are Brian Friel's *Living Quarters (After 'Hippolytus')* [OUdb151] and Silviu Purcarete's version, *Phaedra* [OUdb209].

Some two years after *Phaedra Britannica*, in 1977, Brian Friel wrote a play in which he investigated the idea of causation by human will, not divine direction: *Living Quarters (After 'Hippolytus')*. The play might be seen to owe as much to Pirandello's *Six Characters in Search of An Author* (1921) as to Euripides' *Hippolytus*, but represents another version in which the

receiving culture is using a concept which it believes existed in the world of the original to inform its own time. Looking back at the context of the first performance of *Hippolytus,* a modern writer may be struck by Euripides' daring in representing gods as fallible and unpleasantly 'human', to an audience which, the modern writer may presume, believed in the necessity of reverencing and paying due honour to them. If Euripides could question the nature of the gods, why might not a modern playwright question modern beliefs in determinism and in linear progression in time or narrative?

The replacing of gods and chorus with 'Sir' - the narrator/director - allows Friel to play with modern ideas of the death of the *auteur*, the death of god/s, and human responsibility for causality. It also enables him to return to his characteristic preoccupations with the danger, for Ireland, of living in the past, and with the construction of history by selective memory. As Elmer Andrews shows,[32] Friel does engage in the debate which must inevitably surround the action of *Hippolytus* - to what extent are the humans mere pawns of the gods? could they have behaved other than as ordained? - but his version also deploys a narrative alienation technique to discuss the construction and misconstruction of meaning through unstable words.[33] Euripides shows action as resulting from spoken words which should never have been uttered, words which are misapplied or mistaken, and have fatal consequences. Friel plays with the possibility that one might rewrite history - change the course of fate - by changing the words which describe the actions. The status and motives of the Phaedra figure (who does, in fact, have a mutually satisfactory affair with her stepson) are hence of less concern to Friel. Through the authoritative figure of 'Sir', the characters are curbed in their attempts to rewrite or correct their histories, and in this respect, Friel replaces the gods with historical inevitability, while, at the same time, destabilising expectations by presenting a story which is not, as its title avows, 'after *Hippolytus*'.[34]

In extreme contrast to Friel's approach to the question of the gods in the play of *Hippolytus* was the production of a *Phaedra*, under the direction of Silviu Purcarete, by the Theatre of Craiova, Romania. The production (adapted from Seneca and Euripides by Purcarete) had its world

premiere in June 1993 in Vienna, its British premiere in Glasgow in November of that year, and returned to Britain in 1995 after an extensive international tour. The much abbreviated dialogue was in Romanian with English surtitles.[35]

The influence of physical theatre was very obvious, with vocal music and sound language supplementing the text, and with movement of chorus and principals verging on dance. In this production, the audience entered the theatre to find a group of monk-like musicians seated across centre stage, playing soothingly repetitive percussion. The two goddesses entered separately and occupied the stage space for some time before the start of the action, clearly vying for dominance. Artemis was wrapped like a mummy in white bandages, impenetrably chaste, and moved in slow motion like a sleep-walker. She was associated with a cool white light, as if in perpetual moonglow. Her speech (over front of house speakers) was eerie, whispered, and measured. Aphrodite's voice was also relayed as a whisper, but an agitated, febrile one; her movements were rapid and animal-like. She sniggered at the account of Phaedra's malaise, and, whereas Artemis seemed to make contact with the ground only reluctantly, picking her feet up between steps, Aphrodite rolled, rushed, and in general conveyed the physicality of the goddess. Her long, tangled dark hair often obscured her face, and her ample arms and legs were visible, although only in the full light of the curtain line-up was it clear that she was wearing a baby-doll nightdress.

The natures of the two goddesses were thus suggested by design, choreography, and the use of stage space. Though the human characters were played in a slightly more realistic manner, the overall style of the production was non-realistic, so there was no disjunction between the world of mortals and of immortals: both were equally different from the world of the audience. Because the goddesses were presented as allegoric, almost as grotesques, there was no problem for the audience in deciding whether they were 'more' or 'less' than human; they were clearly of another order of being, and, accordingly, all the more unpredictable, powerful and dangerous. Though Purcarete had followed Seneca in having Phaedra confront Hippolytus and Theseus face-to-face and kill herself with Hippolytus's sword, he retained the on-stage appearances of the gods

from Euripides, allowing for the consequent feeling of indignation that their interference in humans' lives arouses in watchers both on and off stage.

The problem of Hippolytus

Perhaps one of the most difficult points of the play for a modern interpreter is how to represent Hippolytus. Hippolytus's speech against women has been interpreted by modern theatre practitioners as having the ring of diverted or perverted eroticism. Modern actors or directors who have had experience of presenting the jealous passion of Shakespeare's Leontes, or more relevantly here, Posthumus,[36] or the formulaic misogynism of Jacobean satirists - Marston's 'Malevole' in *The Malcontent*, or Shakespeare's Hamlet - could find post-Freudian motivation for Hippolytus's extreme reaction in, say, a devotion to his dead Amazon mother; or in his undisclosed homosexuality; or even, perversely, in his guilty awareness of his own attraction to his step-mother.

A modern reading can show him as a genuine dedicatee, simply too innocent of human (and so, of divine) emotions to realise his danger; or as a haughty, beautiful but rather precious young man who congratulates himself on having captured the favour of a goddess. Costuming can present him as a monk (The Actors of Dionysus in their 1993 production [OUdb833] dressed him in saffron Buddhist robes); or as someone who prefers the company of men and an outdoor life to the favours of women - as in Purcarete's *Phaedra* where Hippolytus headed a small group of loin-clothed 'braves' who joined in a communal bath on their return from hunting. In this production, too, Hippolytus, when angry, snorted and reared, horse-like.

If the audience, modern or ancient, is invited to see Hippolytus as something less than a martyr for his religious devotion, as a boy not willing to become a mature man, or as arrogant, then Aphrodite begins to seem to have a point, and Hippolytus's love of Artemis is not totally holy and his attitude to women not entirely 'natural'. The reading which sees Hippolytus as something of a monster or a freak will also show Phaedra as doubly imposed upon by Aphrodite;

first because she is fated to suffer unrequited love, and secondly, because her obsession is for a less than perfect object.

Doing violence to the myth: Sarah Kane's *Phaedra's Love*

One of the attractions of the Senecan over the Euripidean account of the story for recent writers is perhaps to be seen in Seneca's use of descriptions of violence. Playwrights like Edward Bond and Howard Brenton have used stage images of physical brutality and horror to image contemporary political violence and exploitation, and the film industry has made possible the 'realisation' of horrors for entertainment, so Seneca's approach serves two distinct appetites in the entertainment world: political allegory and spectacular realism.

The most recent English version of Seneca's account of the story, Sarah Kane's *Phaedra's Love* [OUdb869] (1996) was commissioned by the Gate Theatre, London, as part of a 'New Plays, Old Sources' collaborative scheme. Sarah Kane's first play, *Blasted* (1995) had established her as an Angry Young Woman who used atrocities of sex and violence in an Artaud-esque way. In a pre-opening interview with David Benedict in *The Independent*, 15 May, 1996, Kane explained her choice of Seneca's play in preference to Euripides' as the basis for *Phaedra's Love*. She found Euripides' 'misogyny' 'hilarious', registered the 'totally contemporary' theme of a corrupt royal family, and set about making Hippolytus more believable: 'This supposedly beautiful boy is, to my mind, totally unattractive and other than the influence of the gods, I couldn't see why Phaedra would fall in love with him ... I didn't want the passion imposed by the external force of the gods. I wanted to give it to the characters, to make it a human tragedy, so I turned him into something quite different.' Her solution to the problem of how to mediate Hippolytus's invulnerability to love (acceptable to the Greeks as occasioned by dedication to the goddess of chastity) was, in critic Paul Taylor's view, a brilliant idea: 'the denial expresses itself here not in celibacy but in indiscriminate indulgence'.[37] In Kane's reading of the character, Hippolytus became a monster of indulgence, not of denial.

The action of her play takes place on Hippolytus's birthday, and Hippolytus is first seen sprawled in front of a television, surrounded by crisp packets and sweet wrappers, consuming hamburgers, masturbating. He consumes with equal contempt and impassivity the birthday gifts of his subjects and the sexual attentions of his stepmother, and of the priest who visits him in prison. It is not sex that Hippolytus denies his stepmother but love, and only with her suicide (as in Euripides, by hanging) and the accusation of rape does he begin to emerge from a zombie-like state of desperate sensuality:

HIPPOLYTUS: What happened?
STROPHE: Hung.
(Silence)
Note saying you'd raped her.
A long silence.

HIPPOLYTUS: She shouldn't have taken it so seriously.
STROPHE: She loved you.
HIPPOLYTUS: *(looks at her)* Did she?
STROPHE: Tell me you didn't rape her.
HIPPOLYTUS: Love me?
STROPHE: Tell me you didn't do it.
HIPPOLYTUS: She says I did and she's dead. Believe her.
Easier all round.
STROPHE: What is wrong with you?
HIPPOLYTUS: This is her present to me.
STROPHE: What?
HIPPOLYTUS: Not many people get a chance like this.
This isn't tat. This isn't bric-a-brac.
STROPHE: Deny it. There's a riot.
HIPPOLYTUS: Life at last.[38]

Kane's version may be seen as feminist in that it is the women of the royal family, Phaedra and Strophe, who attempt to liberate the big ideals of life; in the case of the former, love, and of the latter, truth. But the account of the story is nearer Theatre of Cruelty than to Euripides or to Shakespearean notions of the redemption of society through female healing powers. Kane talks of *Phaedra's Love* being about extreme depression; a state in which, for her, 'everything cancels itself out'.[39] This is not the situation in *Hippolytus*, where opposition leads to conflict, climax and then resolution, rather than to nihilism. For Euripides, the war of Artemis and Aphrodite does not imply the destruction of gods, but the progression of mortals to a situation where suffering demands channels of expression and rituals for expiation and protection. At the end of Kane's play, Hippolytus, having been half-strangled, castrated, disembowelled, stoned and left to

die beside the bodies of Strophe and Theseus, revives sufficiently to see vultures about to descend on him, and expires saying: 'If there could have been more moments like this' (Kane, 1996, 87). He is not a Prometheus, eternally suffering the tearing of vultures for his championship of humanity against the gods, but a man who has lived in a world so full of horror and of greedy consumption that his capacity to appreciate both pain and pleasure has been destroyed.

Edith Hall, reviewing the production, having said that 'there is such a thing as Atrocity Fatigue ... The acts of brutality, which lack both conviction and any sense of timing, are all either tedious or laughable', suggests that 'Perhaps Kane is struggling towards a realisation that her true *métier* is not serious drama, but comedy in the absurdist tradition'.[40] One might add that outrageousness at this level could be seen as Grand Guignol. Certainly, Greek theatre is at the back of Kane's mind. Although she dismissed, in her interview with David Benedict, the idea of off-stage violence ('if you're not going to see what happens, why not stay at home? Why pay £10 *not* to see it?), she flippantly concedes her play is 'not a tea-party. Blame it on the Greeks'. However, the play outrages any expectations an audience might have because of its title, and implicitly uses the distance and the assumed restraints of the original as boundaries to transgress. In Kane's version, there are no gods, no chitons, no chorus; the royal family is debased, the people of the city are brutal and stupid, and sex and violence are deliberately performed on, not off-stage. But the questions about fate and free-will, and about suffering, experience and wisdom are still (just) discernible beneath the blood, guts and sperm.

Productions of *Hippolytus*

It might have been expected that the women playwrights who began, in the 1970s, to make use of old as well as contemporary sources, would have found more obviously in Euripides' account of the woman caught between two male constructs of female types (Artemis and Aphrodite), and torn between (personal) emotional need and (public) societal or religious constraints, the paradigm of the plight of the New Woman. It was, in fact, a male writer - an ex-teacher of literature with an interest in anthropology and myth, David Rudkin - who produced in 1978 'A

Realisation' of Euripides' *Hippolytus* for the RSC [OUdb141]. This version, directed by Ron Daniels, was performed at The Other Place at Stratford in 1978, and then on tour, in 1979.

As was almost *de rigueur* at this time, the choruses were pared down to one young woman for the female chorus and one 'Man of the Household' who was Hippolytus's adviser in the opening scene. The design scheme was simple: white or pale, non-period costumes, a rough-textured wall flat across the rear stage and a low dais for Phaedra's couch. Hippolytus (Michael Pennington) wore a gold neck chain and leather wrist bands, which hinted at a pride in his status and self-consciousness, if not actual vanity. Perhaps the most interesting directorial decision was the doubling of Artemis with Aphrodite, both played by Juliet Stevenson, with only the merest of suggestions of costume change (Artemis wore a fringed white cotton scarf/veil) to distinguish between them. This effectively presented the two goddesses as two opposed sides of human nature, though not, specifically, of female nature.[41] Although Rudkin's prose translation and paring down of cast and of chorus speeches reduced the status of the play from battle of natural forces to domestic tragedy, the complexity of human emotion was well served, and the reconciliation scene between Theseus (Patrick Stewart) and Hippolytus, under the austere but other-worldly eye of Artemis, gained in pathos by its simplicity and directness.

In 1991, Andrei Serban (who was, in 1992, to direct *An Ancient Trilogy*) collaborated with David Lan (a playwright with a degree in anthropology who had worked with Caryl Churchill in 1986 on her meditation on the *Bacchae*, *A Mouthful of Birds*) on *Hippolytus*. The production [OUdb870] at the Almeida theatre had a two-woman, black-swathed, female chorus, and an impressive cast: Janet Suzman as Phaidra, Ian McDiarmid as Theseus, Brenda Bruce as the Nurse, and Duncan Bell as Hippolytos. In contrast to the RSC's bright, light, open design, the set suggested an enclosed, harsh world, with 'a set like the innards of a gasometer, blood-hued, rock-strewn and replete with climbing rungs'.[42] Lan's translation/version undercut the possibility of melodrama or ponderous portentousness, with the chorus 'more like cynical journalists trying to sift the truth from gossip' and the Nurse (in 'a quirky straw hat') given staccato ripostes as well as longer speeches of sophistry. The goddesses were often on stage,

presiding over the action: 'Phaidra ... is put deeper into love's trance when Aphrodite mounts her, simulating sex, and stimulating her victim's anguish'. There was no question but that the humans were pawns of the gods, and that Hippolytos, by, in this production, challenging Aphrodite directly, invites his own ruin.

A feature of modern performances of *Hippolytus* which may alter our reading of Phaedra's plight is that most productions (as, for example, the 1978 RSC one already noted), it is scaled down to a domestic drama with a minimal cast. Inevitably, this lessens the impact of private upon public. It is the horror of the thought of her shame being made public, and what that means for her children and her father that drives Phaedra from passive despair to desperate action. Although the chorus is sworn to secrecy, it is still party to Phaedra's sense of sin, and the larger the chorus on stage, the more oppressive is Phaedra's sense of being observed, discussed and judged; like her mother before her, she has become the subject of common talk. In Purcarete's production, a large chorus (female, but in long coats, trilby hats and comic walking sticks) provided a constant presence of observers, murmuring, tut-tutting, and shifting in constant movement, so that Phaedra was never free from observation by them or by a sidling, sniggering Earth-mother of an Aphrodite. A director must make a decision, too, about whether to keep Phaedra onstage during Hippolytus's speech of outrage against women. Is his speech directed solely at the Nurse, or at the Nurse and the female chorus, or is it also directed at Phaedra? If she is on-stage, does he immediately notice her? Does he face her, or pointedly ignore her, having registered her presence? The last option would give a sense of Hippolytus's public shaming of Phaedra, implying that she is too degraded, too disgraceful in his eyes to be addressed personally; she is beneath his notice. As Euripides had already suggested in *Medea* in 431, what makes women like Phaedra dangerous to men is the desperate lengths to which they feel driven by the thwarting of private feelings by public, male-orchestrated laws, conventions or loyalties.

As has been indicated, Euripides' 'reformed' *Hippolytus* is not a play which has received a great amount of attention from English theatre directors. This is also true in the United States, as Karelisa V. Hartigan notes:

> Perhaps its theme of incestuous and illicit passion, effectively taken over by Eugene O'Neill in *Desire Under the Elms*, and which surfaces with regularity in the daily soap operas, has become too common to be interesting in its original form. Or perhaps Euripides' text fails to attract directors because it lacks the more traditional grand and heroic characters.[43]

Nor, one might add, are there traditional villains, and the real villainess of the piece is not Phaedra but Aphrodite.

Though it poses questions about responsibility and about the need for and the dangers of passion, the play moves audience sympathy between the three principal characters. It is also a play which is concerned with communication and the dangerous power of words; with representation and interpretation; with confronting and being confronted.[44] This was the aspect of the play which Mary Beard and John Henderson investigated in their 1992 display at the Museum of Classical Archaeology in Cambridge, a display designed to run in tandem with that year's Cambridge Greek Play production of *Hippolytus*. Like any re-telling or version of a text, this 'play-as-museum' was intended to cast new light on the original while turning the light of the original into the eyes of the observers. A particular ploy used was to group statues or casts to regard each other, so that, for example, one male statue (Hippolytus) confronted women (Amazons), and one female statue (Phaedra) was confronted by multiple 'Hippolytuses'. The addition of modern 'props' - a bikini; urban litter; 'scene-of-incident' tape - acted as a distancing device and by way of comment. In this way, the viewers brought their own gazes to bear on the scenes and participated in a performance piece, without words but full of spectacle. Reference to the concept of the gendered gaze, which creates or corrects according to its own assumptions and value system, was being used to inform this 'Play of Desire'.[45] In just such a way, it could be argued, had Euripides invited his audience to re-assess their assumptions about the figure of Phaedra and see her mythic character, even more than those of Hippolytus and Theseus, as having been constructed by previous generations of men.

Pasiphaë and male construction of myth

It is not surprising that Seneca should have made more than Euripides of Phaedra's maternal inheritance. K. M. Coleman debates the feasibility of performance of the story of Pasiphaë and the bull in the Roman ampitheatre as just one of the inventive 'fatal charades' of punishment which Nero favoured as a means of providing entertainment as well as a disincentive.[46] References to bestiality might be expected, like the lurid picking over of Hippolytus's remains in *Phaedra*, to appeal to Nero. But though Euripides had devoted a whole play to the subject of Pasiphaë's coupling with the bull (*Cretans*, possibly c. 438), she is not cited in Aristophanes' plays as one of Euripides' bad examples to women. Perhaps, if, as Collard suggests, the play's action extended to include the flight of Daedalus and Icarus, the real focus of the play was the bad behaviour of the Cretans generally, and Minos, not Pasiphaë, in particular since, as has been indicated, the fragment of Pasiphaë's speech of defence puts the blame for her obsession on Minos: 'Poseidon has trapped you and exacted his justice; but he launched <the affliction> at me'.[47] (Collard notes that fr. 472e (Pasiphaë's defence) includes an argument that Hippolytus is to use to Theseus in his defence; that there was nothing about the alleged partner in shame which might have induced the accused to act against the dictates of decency, law or reason.) So Euripides' Pasiphaë (who is understood to have been released from her imprisonment in the Labyrinth by a god at the end of the play) is seen as a pawn of the gods, but may therefore have been less complex and more two-dimensional than Euripides' Phaedra, who, in her last hours, if not in her death, approaches the status of tragic heroine.

The generic ambiguity of narratives about women who suffer desire for a taboo or unattainable object has already been mentioned. The woman desperate for sex may be a ludicrous and comic figure, but the woman whose desire precipitates her into taking a non-feminine initiative is to be feared as potential cause of tragic upset. The myth of Pasiphaë reveals a cluster of male fears about female sexuality: that it is not subject to control by reason, being the undiluted expression of the power of Aphrodite/Eros; that it can subvert and destroy men (as, in Pasiphaë's case, she could not achieve her goal without suborning a male craftsman, Daedalus), and that it produces monstrous issue, either real or metaphoric. Two novels at least have dealt with the myth on its own terms. Mary Renault's *The King Must Die* (1958) replaced the Minotaur with a real man,

Asterion, and made his father an Assyrian bull-leaper whom an infatuated Minos kept out of the bull-ring for safety - so denying his sacrifice to 'the Goddess', not to Poseidon. Michael Ayrton, fascinated, as a sculptor, by Daedalus the artificer, gives his account of the construction of the cow frame for Pasiphaë's use in *The Maze-Maker* (1967).

Different ancient sources give different explanations for Pasiphaë's infatuation, and in displacing responsibility for her shameful obsession on to the shoulders of a god, excuse her, to a degree.[48] If, like Euripides' second Phaedra, Pasiphaë was being used by a god (in this case, Poseidon) as a way of punishing a man for his lack of respect, the woman seems less culpable. Similarly, if Pasiphaë is being punished by Aphrodite for failing to pay her proper devotion, this makes the woman's bestiality something imposed on her, not arising from her own warped sexuality. But the idea that the myth might be a male construct designed to shift the burden of guilt for male sexual obsession on to women is one that could perhaps only have been articulated in the latter half of this century, and it is this explanation for Pasiphaë's infamous reputation which has been dramatised by playwright Geoff Gillham in his (unpublished) version of the story, *Getting To It* (1994) [OUdb157].

Pasiphaë is presented in the first scene of *Getting To It* as a 'normal' young woman. Relaxed, content with her life alone in Gortyna, she nonetheless accepts the proposal of Minos whom she seems to have an ability to calm and soothe, both physically, with her massage, and mentally, with her supportive advice. But it is made clear that Minos is preoccupied with the suspected machinations of his absent brother, Sarpedon, who has succeeded in attracting to his court Miletus, over whose affections the brothers had vied. Though he denies being concerned about Sarpedon, Minos's dismissal of Miletus sounds like sour grapes: 'Miletus chose my brother and my brother is welcome to the little gigolo'.[49] As she sits astride Minos's back, massaging him, Pasiphaë speaks to the audience of the story of Zeus and Europe [*sic*]:

> Had the micro-explosion in Pasiphaë's brain
> Not extinguished itself in the moment of its origin
> She would have recalled this memory and with it
> Have experienced a premonition

That in this moment she was entering the antechamber
Of a labyrinth.

For Minos was the son of the union of Zeus and Europe
On that deserted beach.

(Scene One)

The second scene of the play ('Momentary happiness') records the arrival from the sea of the bull sent by Poseidon for sacrifice. Minos and Pasiphaë watch from the shore, Minos becoming increasingly aroused. He takes Pasiphaë from behind, pushing her on to all fours, telling her to go on describing the bull and not allowing her to touch or look at him. After this rapid, animal act of copulation, he becomes distant towards her, repulsing her attempts at intimacy, but still insisting that he wants to marry her:

MINOS: Of course I want to marry you! I want you as my wife!
PASIPHAË I love you Minos.
(he pulls her to him, and kisses her on the head.)
Just now, when you walked away, I felt like I was entering a dark place ...
You don't need to walk away from me Minos.
MINOS: *(holding her look)* I wanted to look at the bull. That's all. *(taking her, warmly)* Come on. *(shouting as they go)* Poseidon, I thank you for this day. For the bull, and for Pasiphaë!

(Scene Two)

Gillham is quite clearly locating in Minos, not in Pasiphaë, problems and confusions about sexuality: there is the suggestion of his covert homosexuality, his subconscious need to be the bull that his father Zeus was, as well as his desire to possess the bull of Poseidon, sexually, in the person of Pasiphaë. There are also complications with the power struggle between brothers over a male lover, and the need for Minos to present to his subjects an image of a wise, strong ruler. A series of scenes shows Pasiphaë's attempt to establish an emotional intimacy with Minos, and his rejection of her. She persuades Minos to allow Daedalus refuge, for humanitarian reasons, in Crete, but in Scene Five, 'Owning and Living', she accuses Minos of having reduced Daedalus, too, to a possession - like the bull of Poseidon and like Pasiphaë herself. Each of his acquisitions - wife, bull, craftsman - has been misused: his wife is excluded from his emotional life; the bull remains unsacrificed, despite Pasiphaë's pleas; and Daedalus's creative ingenuity is being used to design machines of war. Like Pasiphaë, the audience gradually comes to realise that Minos is possessed by needs and aims which are to render him a monster. This is made clear finally in

Scene 6: 'Human Monsters Have Human Faces Like the Rest of Us', in which Minos accuses the now pregnant Pasiphaë of having suborned Daedalus to help her have sex with the bull, and reveals designs and a signed confession from Daedalus to prove his case. The first half of the play closes with a scene in which the action cross-cuts between Pasiphaë's tender washing and nursing of the perfect human baby to which she has given birth, in isolation, at the heart of the Labyrinth in which she has been imprisoned, and Minos's public announcement of his imprisonment of his wife for her bestiality, the birth of a hideous monster, the Minotaur, and its destruction of its own mother. Minos uses the threat of the 'Minotaur' and the consequent need for security to validate his imposing rigid authority on the state: mobilising troops, making demands on his people, and taking 'any measure necessary to protect ... and save this beautiful country of ours'.

The second half of the play concerns Pasiphaë and her seven- or eight-year-old son, Asterius, living in the Labyrinth, and shows the compromises Pasiphaë has to make in order to survive. In Scene Eleven, 'Human remains at the Centre of the Labyrinth', Asterius brings his mother a human arm to eat - an arm which he has cut from one of the sacrificial victims sent into the Labyrinth. She is horrified and strikes out at him, both (ineffectually) with the labrys, and, more hurtfully, with her words: 'Did I bring you up for this?' she screams as she drives him out of their home at the heart of the labyrinth. 'Animal! I'll kill you! I'll kill you if you ever come back here! You're a beast! A wild beast!' But in the following scene, the child does return, and Pasiphaë welcomes him back with joy, relief and apologies for her rejection. When he questions her about the name 'Minotaur' - which the first people he had encountered in the labyrinth had used of him - she tries to explain the circumstances of their being incarcerated, assuring him that he is Minos's son and not a monstrous hybrid. The final, uncertain, truce between the animal and the human in human nature is called when Pasiphaë concedes that in order to live they may have to eat the bodies of intruders into the Labyrinth whom Asterion has been able to catch and kill. Because of Minos's treatment of them, they will, it seems, become what he has officially reported them to be: monsters.

The doubling of the roles of Minos and Asterius (by actor Bobby Colvin, in the 1996 touring production) meant that the father-son similarity was very much in the audience's mind. Like Minos, Asterius lacks the ability to express - perhaps even to feel - love, and is dispassionate about using or harming others. Colvin is a tall actor, in his thirties at the time of this production, and there was no pretence at making him look eight years old. However, his vocabulary and syntax as Asterius was that of a child who has been deprived of social contact, and his movements - silent, but assured in the darkness of the labyrinth - contrasted with those of Pasiphaë who, like someone recently blinded, felt her way around the set, and was out of her element in the dark. Thus, Asterius did seem a half-way creature; not an animal, but not totally human, and certainly not socialised.

Gillham's play has a prefatory dedication: 'to the Palestinian people, and especially to the mothers and children who, for many years, have lived in and endured the Labyrinth and expressed their humanity in their struggle against it'. It is just one of a number of plays he has written using mythical or ancient world topics and designed as part of Theatre-in-Education projects, which, through workshops and discussion of the play, allow young people to investigate the issues raised. A recurrent question in his work is what causes war and barbaric behaviour among previously apparently socialised people.[50] In *Getting To It*, although this theme is clearly present, it is impossible, when considering the use in modern theatre of ancient texts or concepts, to ignore another issue: the manipulation of 'history' for (male) political purposes. In Gillham's version of the myth, Pasiphaë becomes a victim, not of Aphrodite alone nor yet of Aphrodite at the instigation of Poseidon, but of male tyranny. For his own reasons, Minos wants to pursue an aggressive military foreign policy. He uses the alleged threat of a monster at home to alarm his subjects, predicting that:

> Our enemies will wish to take advantage of this time of national crisis. Let them understand this: whether they be enemies abroad or enemies here in our homeland, we have not incarcerated this monster that threatens our freedom, our right to live in peace, to have you undo our work. Let them be warned: we are on our guard; we are ready for you.
>
> (Scene Eight)

The imaginary monster is of Minos's own creation: he needs it to exist. Out of his fabrication of the lie about Pasiphaë, however, grow yet more monsters: war, and the effects of war on the innocent and the vulnerable.

There have been, then, over the last decades in English theatre, a number of different responses to myths about women who, because of the power of their unacceptable sexual desires, constituted a danger to their worlds. Versions which recreated or used Seneca's *Phaedra* represented Phaedra as more of a villainess, a woman who let the power of lust master her, and misused her own power in order to protect her reputation and to achieve revenge. Productions which followed Euripides' *Hippolytus* tended to show Phaedra as powerless under the influence of a vindictive Aphrodite, and capable only of one sort of power, the power of (false) words. In versions of *Hippolytus*, naturally, Phaedra must be a less dominant character, and the triangular relationship of wife/husband/son takes on greater importance. Phaedra's predicament is put in the context of a world of men, women, and immortals, and the audience is invited to view and consider their interactions, not to become caught up in sympathy with any one character.

Unlike others of his plays, Euripides' *Hippolytus* has not been important in recent English theatre for the number or variety of its stage performance in translation. What is remarkable is the number of versions or responses it has inspired, both within and beyond the medium of live theatre. The non-dramatic examples of re-telling of the story of Phaedra cited above - film, novel, 'museum-play' - all contribute to a realisation or a belief that 'the text', whether a written play or a transcribed oral myth, is not sacrosanct, and that each age rewrites such 'texts', through re-creation, in its own image. Without knowing what Euripides' first version was like, it is impossible to state with assurance what changes he made in his portrayal of Phaedra, but clearly his revision, which showed a Phaedra less shameless, more tragically exploited by a goddess, and perhaps more subordinate to the main plot of the play, found favour with the judges since it gained him one of the four first prizes he was ever to win.

In recreating the story of Phaedra's mother, Pasiphaë, in a revisionist light, questioning male construction of history, Geoff Gillham was continuing a tradition perhaps as old as the history of theatre itself. What English theatre has not attempted is to defend, or even portray, the Pasiphaë of ancient myth, who not only achieved her sexual desire, but produced, as a result, a creature destructive of human life, who could only be vanquished by the supreme hero-king of Athens. On a superficial level, it might be supposed that this is because the taboos hedging bestiality are so strong (though the emotional or sexual involvement of men with animals has been explored in, for example, Peter Shaffer's *Equus* and Caryl Churchill's *A Mouthful of Birds*). A more positive reason might be that the scapegoating of female sexuality, resulting in the condemnation in myth of a woman who desires what is deemed by her society to be unobtainable or unacceptable, is now recognised for what it is. It is not Aphrodite's power over women which was dangerous, but the denial of the goddess's due respect by men or women alike.

NOTES

1 Writing of Euripides' reputation among his contemporaries for misogyny, Pomeroy (1975, rep. 1994, 103-5) quotes, one after the other, without giving an intervening rider, two speeches from *Thesmophoriazusae* (383-413 & 497-519): the first is a section of the First Woman's accusation of Euripides, but the second is from Mnesilochus's speech about women. The latter might be used to indicate the character's misogyny, rather than his comment on Euripides'.

2 Goldhill (1986), 129.

3 All quotations in translation of *Hippolytus* are from Halleran (1995) unless otherwise stated.

4 Smith, in Larrington (1992), 73.

5 See Pomeroy (1975, rep. 1994), 48-9, and Loraux (1984, rep. 1994), 75.

6 Clark (1989, rep.1993), 6. On Greek ideas on women's physiology and related medical matters, see King (in Cameron & Kuhrt, 1983, 109-27), Blundell (1995, 98-112) and Lefkowitz & Fant (1982, 91-2)

7 The passage 658-61 (Vellacott, 1956, 169) is often used as evidence of this belief:

> The mother is not the true parent of the child
> Which is called hers. She is a nurse who tends the growth
> Of young seed planted by its true parent, the male.

Apollo is making what capital he can on the presumed lesser importance of the female than the male parent to children because this forms a major plank of the platform of his defence of Orestes: that Orestes' duty to revenge his father outweighed his duty to protect his mother. It also leads Apollo into the almost sycophantic, but (as Winnington-Ingram points out in Segal (1983), 99), successful compliment to Athene.

8 The de-bagging of Mnesilochus in *Thesmophoriazusae* (643-8) combines a playing on fear of castration with an element of titillation as the women play 'Hunt the Penis'.

9 See Halleran's introductory notes to his edition of the text (1995), 25-37 on *Hippolytus I.*

10 Graves (1955), 229. He also notes the story of Joseph and Potiphar's wife, which is retold in Islamic poetic tradition by the fifteenth-century Persian poet Jami, who transforms it from its bare essentials in the Koran into a tragic love story. Potiphar's wife, Zulaykha, having been repulsed by Yusuf, is criticised and gossiped about by the women of Memphis. To justify her obsession and to revenge herself on the women, she assembles them at a sumptuous feast, but delays producing Yusuf - the most delectable and mouthwatering delicacy of all - until each woman has been served an orange (by way of dessert) and a knife to cut it with. When Yusuf appears, the ladies present are so overcome by the young man's beauty that they cut their own hands in their distraction. They agree that Zulaykha had no chance to resist infatuation with such more than mortal beauty.

> Of those who wounded their hands, a part
> Lost reason and patience, and mind and heart.
> Too weak the sharp sword of his love to stay,
> They gave up their souls ere they moved away.
> The reason of others grew dark and dim,
> And madness possessed them for love of him.
> Bare-headed, bare-footed, they fled amain,
> And the light that had vanished ne'er kindled again.

(From Ralph T.H. Griffith's translation of Jami's *Yusuf u Zulaikha*, in Kritzeck, 1964.)

Halleran (1995), 21, n.1, in addition to detailing other literature on the 'Potiphar's wife motif', remarks Euripides' apparent interest in the theme.

11 However, Hippolytus's dismissal of Aphrodite at 113, which Vellacott finds 'ironically polite' (1953, 159), but to which Halleran gives a much stronger brusqueness ('to that Cypris of yours I say good riddance'), does come very pointedly third in the list of matters on his mind; after preparations for supper and care of his horses.

12 See Loraux (1987, 9-10) on hanging as a particularly disgraceful and womanish form of suicide.

13 Goldhill (1986), 132-7.

14 See Halleran's commentary on this disputed passage (182-3, notes on lines 381-6). Compare Kovacs (1995, 163) who chooses to translate the *dissai* of 385 as relating to two kinds of *pleasure*, not shame. The pleasure of leisurely gossiping in the women's quarters would then be contrasted, in Kovac's interpretation, with a hothouse of scandal-mongering and character degradation: the two kinds of delight in women's talk could be innocent or viperous. Vellacott omits 384-90 from his translation, on the grounds that they are 'banal irrelevance' and so probably spurious (1953, 160), but this means the loss of the discussion of two meanings for one word.

15 Collard, Cropp & Lee (1995), 65, fr.472e. Pasiphaë blames Minos's failure to sacrifice the bull to Poseidon for causing her obsession.

16 ibid., 89, fr.661.

17 *Thesmophoriazusae*, 497, has Mnesilochus's reference to Euripides' blackening of Phaedra's name. In *The Frogs*, see Barret, trs. (1964), 194-5: 'I didn't clutter *my* stage with harlots like Phaedra and Stheneboea', says Aeschylus, self-righteously.

18 Watling, trs., (1966), 127: 'NURSE: We must prefer a counter-charge against him,/Take up the case ourselves and prove him guilty/Of violation...'

19 This may suggest Seneca knew something of the scene of reconstitution of Pentheus's body in Euripides' *Bacchae*, the section which is believed to have occurred at 1329, and to have been partially supplied later with reference to *Christus Patiens.*

20 Seneca, *Phaedra*, trs. Watling (1966), 103.

21 Cairncross, trs. (1963), 145-7, 145.

22 ibid., 146.

23 Renault tells the story from Theseus's viewpoint. The story-teller assumes in his audience knowledge of the history of the conflict between the 'Sky-gods' (notably Poseidon, as Theseus's putative father, and the 'Earth Mother') which Renault had shown in her account of Theseus's early adventures, *The King Must Die* (1958), as series of clashes and compromises between male and female, newer and old gods - at Eleusis, Troezen, and on Crete. Hippolytus's devotion to the Maiden (Artemis, or the Amazon Moon Goddess) is seen by Theseus as Artemis's revenge on him for seducing one of her priestesses. Though he has legitimate sons by Phaedra, the death of Hippolytus is shown as the end of Theseus's purchase on the future, and Artemis's logical punishment of sexual indulgence. In Renault's version, Phaedra makes a verbal accusation of rape to Theseus, claiming that Hippolytus had offered to restore the old, matriarchal religion. When, after Hippolytus' death, Theseus discovers the truth, he strangles her, forges a suicide note, and hangs her up from the rafters by her own girdle.

24 Mackinnon (1986), 99.

25 See Mackinnon (1986, 99-101), *re* the 'failure' of the film as a tragedy in the eyes of its star, Mercouri, and also for discussion of its translation of the story into 'bourgeois melodrama'. Oliver Taplin in 'The Delphic Idea and after', *TLS*, 17/7/81, 812, dismissed the film as unworthy of serious critical attention.

26 Astley (1991), 175.

27 The concept of double colonisation - by gender and by race - became accepted in post-colonial and feminist discourse in the eighties, but the metaphor of colonisation of the female by the male had been established long before this. See Ashcroft, Griffiths & Tiffin (1995), 250.

28 Astley (1991, 187). This play predates Said (1978) and the post-colonial concept of a constructed Orientalism - the 'INDIA' of Harrison's Preface. However, the fascination with the 'other' of India had already been discussed by E.M.Forster in *A Passage to India* (see Suleri (1987, in Walder, 1990), 247 on India's rape, in two senses). Dollimore (1991, 338) quotes Said on the European quest for 'a different type of sexuality, perhaps more libertine and less guilt ridden'.

29 Harrison (1985), 80.

30 Astley (1991), 192-4, gives a selection of reviews of the 1975 production and one from the *New York Post* (by Clive Barnes) of a production in 1988. At present (September 1998), Rigg is again playing Racine's Phèdre, in a new translation by Ted Hughes, in the Almeida Company production directed by Jonathan Kent [OUdb872]. The set, and to some extent the costuming, suggests seventeenth-century France, but this is not a French classical theatre period piece. Where Harrison had evoked an 'orientalised' version of the power of Venus, Hughes's translation allowed this production to show the Venus/Diana opposition in generational terms. Rigg, now reprising Phèdre as middle-aged woman, added to the taboo of stepmother/stepson desire the desperation of the older woman obsessed by a young man.

31 See Bolt (1992). *Platform Papers I: Translation* is an anthology of the texts of discussions held in public between representatives of the RNT and translators of plays in production at the theatre. In the final paper, Ranjit Bolt talks about translating from a variety of languages; he had not at that time ventured on ancient Greek, but when he did, in 1996, with *The Oedipus Plays*, he chose to render most of the dialogue in pentametric couplets, as Harrison had Racine's alexandrines in *Phaedra Britannica.*

32 Andrews (1995), 138-43.

33 Goldhill (1986) dedicates the end of Chapter Five, on 'Sexuality and Difference', to an examination of Euripides' use of construction and misconstruction of meaning in spoken and written words in *Hippolytus.*

34 For a discussion of the layers of authority invoked by the title of the play, and the extent to which the play may be described as 'After *Hippolytus*', see Jones (1996), 253-64.

35 The description of performance points which follows relies on my own unpublished review of the performance on 21/10/95 at the Leicester Haymarket Theatre, on programme notes and on reviews documented in [OUdb209].

36 See Posthumus's speech in *Cymbeline*, II. iv. 153-86.

37 'Back with a Vengeance', *The Independent,* 23 May 1996, review by Paul Taylor.

38 Kane (1996), 85.

39 'What Sarah did next', *The Independent*, 15 May 1996, interview/article by David Benedict.

40 'A real turn-off, Strophe', *TLS*, 7 June, 1996, review by Edith Hall.

41 The prompt copy, press reviews and production photos of Rudkin's play are held in the Shakespeare Centre Library. In a production in 1993 of David Stuttard's translation of *Hippolytus* [OUdb833] by the Actors of Dionysus (a touring company for which doubling of roles is an accepted norm, on grounds of necessity as well as authenticity), the same actress played the two goddesses *and* Phaedra; a doubling which stresses the extent to which Phaedra is possessed by two warring impulses, and may stand for 'The Female' (including female goddesses) in general.

42 Graham Hassell, *P&Ps*, November 1991, 27.

43 Hartigan (1995), 61. She lists a production in New York in 1948, then no more there until 1968, when there was a further gap of twenty years until a production in Chicago in 1987.

44 Halleran (1995, 44-5) speaks of the importance of the gaze in this play as being 'fundamental to the dynamics of a 'shame culture' '. That the first *Hippolytus* was called *Hippolytos Katakaluptomenos* (*'Hippolytus Veiled'*, Halleran, 25) may suggest that in that version the importance of being looked at or looking another in the face was even more marked, since, by implication, Hippolytus veiled his face in shame at having even been solicited by Phaedra (26). The addition of *'stephanias'* (Halleran, 62) to the title of the second version may imply that Hippolytus (as well as being a bearer of a wreath for Artemis on his first entry) dies a victor, still unbeaten by Aphrodite.

45 Beard & Henderson (1997), 80-130.

46 Coleman (1990), 64.

47 Collard, Cropp & Lee (1995), 53-78.

48 Graves (1955), 293, 88e,f. Graves cites Diodorus Siculus iv. 60, iv. 77.2 and 13.4 and Pausanias vii. 4.5 as authorities for the explanation of Pasiphaë's infatuation with the bull as being either a punishment of Minos by Poseidon or of Pasiphaë herself by Aphrodite.

49 Quotations from *Getting to It* are from a typescript generously made available to me by the playwright. The play has not been published, but was performed at a number of venues by the Big Brum touring company. Intended as a TIE project, with associated workshops and discussions, it did not play in as many schools as was hoped since Scene Two was felt by some teachers to be too sexually explicit to be acceptable for secondary school performance.

50 In *Logos* (unpublished), Gillham put together Heraclitus and a modern geophysicist, and interrogated the way human war activity suggests the movements and sudden ruptures of the earth's techtonic plates. (This information from a telephone conversation with Gillham, 31/5/96.)

CHAPTER 5

THE POWER TO SAY 'NO'

One of the functions of theatre in late twentieth-century Britain has been to serve as a practical aid in education. This chapter deals with the use of myths or texts from Greek theatre as a tool of pedagogy, and shows how modern manipulation of classical plays may, while presenting the appearance of being subversive or dealing with 'dangerous' issues, actually provide channels or defusers for potentially disruptive or rebellious sections of society. Similarly, one of the ways in which fifth-century Athenian theatre seems to have functioned in support of a communal sense of civic and religious identity was by providing a 'voice' for marginal or non-citizen elements in the city.[1] For an Athenian audience, the representation of women exercising power beyond proper limits might help to defuse anxieties about the disruptive threat of such activity in real life. As that threat was to an Athenian audience, so might the threat of an unrestrained youth culture, with a power all its own, have seemed to late twentieth-century post-war generations of parents. Because of changes in the function, forms and subjects of English theatre, it became possible to use drama as a channel for the energy of rebellious youth, using 'classic' (that is, established, canonical) texts - among them, Sophocles' *Antigone* - as a basis for creative and apparently transgressive work in the classroom, drama studio or youth theatre.

Having first compared the place of theatre in the education of the Athenian citizen with the use made of drama in the late twentieth-century education system, I shall deal with the elements of Sophocles' retelling of the story of Antigone which have made that text seem, to twentieth-century educators, particularly appropriate for study by young adults. A brief section on non-English ways of reading the play introduces discussion of how it has been mediated in recent productions in England, taking into account the influence different performance spaces and

venues have had on production, and comparing ways in which the semiotics of performance - casting, movement, design, for example - can emphasise particular issues. An account of the 'Antigones Project' at Stratford in 1992 follows, with the concluding suggestion that this particular Youth Theatre project can be seen as having functioned as, perhaps, did the performance of the story of Antigone in Athenian theatre: potentially disruptive elements which could be dangerous to society being neutralised by ritualisation.

Theatre and the education of the citizen: Fifth-Century Athens

For young citizens and citizen-wives in the making, participation in performances of ritual and theatre of a variety of kinds was essentially part of a way of including them in the religious and political life of the city; of re-affirming their importance as the coming generation, and of doing honour to their parents by singling out offspring for special notice. For the sons of Greek citizens, what we might now describe as practical drama studies were part of their personal and civic education. Though a child's education was the responsibility of the individual parent, there is evidence by the early fifth century for schools at least in some areas of Greece, as well as *ad hoc* private tutoring.[2] While the basics of literacy - and possibly numeracy - formed one necessary strand of the education of a young citizen, equally important were physical and aesthetic training. Schools were sited near to the *palaistra*, much as modern schools have adjacent playing fields, and physical training was not simply focused on producing fighters; as early as 573, the four major Games (Olympic, Pythian, Isthmian and Nemean) had been established, in which young men might bring credit to their families and cities in a pacific, though intensely fought, *agon*.[3] But a well-educated boy would also be expected to be able to dance, sing, recite Homer, and to attempt compositions of his own to the self-accompaniment of the lyre. The development of the individual was, clearly, important, but the subtext of this education system (which only in the last quarter of the fifth century began to be undermined by the suspect influences of the Sophists) was that the state was as strong as the sum of its parts; a community needs its champions and soloists, but it needs - whether in war, politics or worship - communal teamsmanship more.

A boy might sing and dance in his tribe's dithyrambic chorus - just one among fifty, but, nonetheless, on show in the Theatre of Dionysus before the assembled city, and bearing a partial responsibility for the success of his group's offering on behalf of the *choregos*. A *choregos* for the dithyrambs invested a good deal in his chorus, and the rewards in terms of kudos were considerable.[4] Boys who had obvious ability in singing and movement could look forward to being, when they became young men, one of the smaller chorus for a comedy at the City Dionysia (from 486) or the Lenaia (from c. 445), or one of the even more select band who provided a chorus for each of the three days of tragedy and satyr plays. Of the twelve or fifteen members of the tragic chorus, one - presumably he who combined a strong singing/speaking voice with an impressive stage presence and the ability to give a lead on-stage to the rest of the troupe - would take the role of *koryphaios*, the equivalent of the *exharchos* of non-dramatic choral performance. Without actually becoming that peculiar creature - a professional actor - a citizen-in-the-making could thus experience the thrill of performing in public; of being part of the theatrical experience of thousands of older, wiser, more important men than himself. To have been the *koryphaios*, even to have been one of the chorus in a winning play at the City Dionysia, would have been an experience a young man could remember with pride all his life.

The performance of song and dance or ritual movement was not, of course, restricted to boys. Girls and women needed to be able to participate in choral, processional singing: at the Panathenaia, for the Eleusinian Mysteries, and perhaps at Anthesteria. In *Lysistrata* (641ff.),[5] the 'female' chorus identifies the particular ages at which a beautiful, well-born, capable girl could hope to star in religious rituals - as a carrier of 'the sacred things', or as a little bear of Artemis during the period, in which girls of between seven and eleven would take part, of deliberate wildness before the taming for marriage.[6] Participation in such rituals would have required some degree of training, or perhaps stage managing, even for groups of singers or attendants, and, for individuals chosen to carry out specific acts or points of ritual, even more coaching by the relevant priestesses would have been necessary. But (as for boys singing in the dithyrambic choruses) the point of such training was not to develop the individual's talent, or to

provide for an individual a personally memorable or enriching experience (though this would undoubtedly have happened), but to give public demonstration of the integration into the community of those who would not otherwise have had civic roles to play. Beyond the circle of her immediate family, a pre-pubescent girl would have no importance, but as a little bear of Artemis, one of the *arrhephoroi* beginning the weaving of Athena's new *peplos*, or one of the *kanephoroi* bearing the baskets of sacred symbols at the Panathenaia, she might achieve a status which was universally recognised by the Athenian community. Although it is somewhat coloured by being in comedy mode and writtten by a man, the Chorus song from *Lysistrata* already cited expresses women's gratitude to the City for having given them, as young girls and *parthenoi*, a special importance. Similarly, tasks like the weaving of the new *peplos*, or basket-bearing in the Panathenaia would have been activities which allowed the city to honour citizens through their daughters or wards. It was important that the girls involved carried out such ritual performances and tasks with the greatest degree of what would now be termed professionalism, since: 'Just as the entire community could suffer from one person's disruption of ritual, so too could the entire community benefit from one person's responsible and correct performance of ritual'.[7]

For adult Athenians, both men and women, ritual and civic performance could continue to feature as part of their community life (for women, at the Eleusis mysteries and the Thesmophoria,[8]) and quite apart from specifically religious ceremonies, citizens could represent their tribes in the dithyrambic contests. Since each of the ten tribes presented a dithyrambic performance by fifty men in addition to the fifty-strong boys' chorus, it is clear that a considerable investment of money and time was made in these communal civic competitions. That men taking part in the dithyrambic contest were exempt from military service indicates the importance placed on this activity and may help to explain why the great periods of dithyrambic production occurred each side of, not during, the Peloponnesian War.[9] Dithyrambs, like tragedy and comedy, required a good chorus trainer and sufficient rehearsal space, preferably a circular floor which would mimic the orchestra.

Winkler argues that the 'billy-goat singers' of the tragedy choruses were ephebes, and notes that the number of ephebes in any year (or 'year-class', as he describes it) was something between four hundred and fifty and five hundred.[10] Thus, the selection process for dramatic choruses, which cut across tribal divisions, gave any one year's ephebes a less than one-in-ten chance of being in a tragedy chorus. There remained, of course, five comedies to be accommodated with twenty-five-strong choruses, so a young man's chance of taking part in the City Dionysia as chorus member in one or other type of play was improved. The rank and file rectangular formation of tragedy choruses suggests a development from military drill manoeuvres - whereas the circle of the dithyramb looks like the adaptation of a follow-my-leader processional line into a shape easily overseen and controllable from the centre by an aulete. Winkler (50-7) makes a case for the training of the tragic chorus being an extension of, and building on, the military exercise drill practised by the ephebes who, he asserts, constituted the chorus - a case particularly convincing when he cites ancient commentators who stress the rhythmic and unison qualities of such exercise, and its showing physical preparedness rather than military aggression. An equivalent contrast might now be made between the often aesthetically pleasing controlled movements of Oriental martial arts and the intended threat and brutal display of power of parade-ground drill. The question which remains is the extent to which such pre-determined choreography was affected by mimesis; how differently might a chorus of Theban elders move from a chorus of beautiful maidens, or from a chorus of Furies?[11]

The civic and religious importance of the dramatic festivals was, of course, paramount. Aesthetic and entertainment value were secondary. For the majority of the adult citizen population, the theatre role which they knew best was spectator, and their participation in the festivals was a civic duty. An audience is, after all, what makes theatre, and this audience had the responsibility of bringing 'the civic gaze' (Goldhill, in Easterling, 1997, 57) to bear on an activity which allowed self-examination as well as reinforcement of civic self-image. Whether in the fifth century young people were present in the audiences is not certain; the war orphan ephebes who had been presented in the theatre in the ceremonies preceding the Great Dionysia had their own seating area for the competition, but they were a very special section of Athenian

pre-citizen society.[12] Participation in the theatre by way of watching and judging was certainly part of all Athenian citizens' adult experience, but performing in dithyrambic or theatrical competitions was the experience of a much smaller proportion of the population.

During the last quarter of the fifth century, a number of elements combined to affect attitudes to theatre. The mid-century period of peace and Periclean order between the end of the Persian war and the start of war with Sparta was also the period of activity of the three great tragedians. While surviving texts suggest that contemporary events were echoed in their works (Aeschylus's *Persians* following the defeat of the Persians at Salamis and Plataia, and Sophocles' *Oedipus Tyrannus* after the plague in 430), it was predominantly through the retelling of myths that Athenian religious and political beliefs were reasserted. Towards the end of the century, the setbacks and defeats during the war with Sparta changed the mood in Athens to a more anxious, less self-confident one. Though scepticism and agnosticism had been expressed by earlier thinkers (Parmenides and Zeno, and then Protagoras[13]) it was the advent of the sophists which allowed what appeared to be subversive beliefs, or denial of beliefs, to be spread among young men who were to be the next generation of citizens. There seemed to the older generation to be a prostitution of learning by 'sophists' who exacted large fees for the teaching of rhetoric. Because it had become increasingly important for a young man who wished to cut any sort of figure in the *polis* to be able to perform convincingly in the courts or in open discussion, young adults enrolled with sophists who could teach them the art of persuasion as well as the tricks of logic by which day could be proved night, or Helen innocent. This was, though not recognised as such, a form of self-presentation not unlike theatrical performance, and the whole situation was appropriately mocked by Aristophanes in *The Clouds* in 423.

At the same time that this addition was made to the education programme of citizens-to-be, Euripides was increasingly tempting charges of impiety or blasphemy by his portrayal on stage of gods behaving badly, and of humans blaming gods or denying divine power or control - for example, in *Women of Troy* (415) and *Ion* (c. 413). Although Aristophanes represents Euripides' 'irreligion' as matter for comedy (in *The Frogs*), Euripides was prosecuted in court for

impiety, and while he escaped condemnation, others - either Sophists by belief or 'sophists' by profession - were not so lucky.[14] When Plato came to write *The Republic* (c.375) some fourteen years after the execution of Socrates, he condemned both career sophists and poet-playwrights as equally dangerous because of their need to place the manipulation of an audience above regard for morality. In the course of describing a curriculum for the education of Guardians in the ideal republic, Plato's 'Socrates' advises (Book III, 395-7) against allowing them to represent (even in reading aloud) any characters but 'the good man', and then in 'the unmixed style'.[15] Clearly this would not be theatre as the Athenians knew and enjoyed it, and as it contributed to their civic education and sense of identity.

Drama in Education: Late Twentieth-Century England

Concepts and history

> Understanding what working together as a community or society might mean and appreciating the role of the individual in that enterprise are two of the main educational purposes of drama.[16]

This pronouncement by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Schools might have gained approval in the late fifth century B.C., if not, indeed, later, by the author of *The Republic.* It is an attitude which, in its tacit allowance of state intervention, might have been expressed in the first half of this century, or after the late Seventies - in fact, its date is 1989 - but not during the Sixties.

Gavin Bolton (1984), traces the development of drama used in education in England this century from 'Speech and Drama', which went hand-in-hand with its lady-like companion, Elocution, to the Child-centred Drama of Peter Slade and Dorothy Heathcote in the 1950s and 1960s. The shock of their creative approach led to a division of functions for drama; for the Old School, it remained a way of preparing for The School Play, but for 'progressives', it could provide an opportunity to experiment with the use of role playing, to investigate group dynamics, and, because doing drama was perceived by children as 'not proper lessons', to take children into excitingly liminal territory. What was being advocated was the exercise of the child's individual imagination (though working co-operatively with the group was another prime aim) and because

process rather than end product was what counted, this approach to drama in schools did not require nor was it intended for performance. Because of these two factors, opponents of this new school suspected the whole business of being at best an excuse for 'messing about' and at worst, a meddling with psychotherapy which teetered on the brink of lunatic fringe. The effect of the work of Slade, Heathcote and Way[17] was to put emphasis on the process of 'doing drama' as a way of educating (as opposed to teaching) the individual, and although teachers might applaud this aim in principle, conducting a drama class which is not text-based and does not use the discipline of working towards an end product as a means of structuring and controlling the session requires a high degree of confidence and expertise on the part of the teacher. However, the Plowden Report of 1967 supported the concept of child-centred drama in schools; teachers' training colleges began to offer courses in this area, and public finance was being put into 'progressive' education techniques, including the use of practical drama in the classroom.

These developments in educational drama were occurring in parallel with seismic movements in theatre. All levels of professional theatre in Britain (and consequently many areas of amateur, and especially student theatre) were affected by the post-'Kitchen Sink' influences outlined in the introductory chapter. From established theatres like the RSC, through experimental but prestige London-based theatres like the Royal Court, right through to 'Happenings', there was an impetus to reject text, to rediscover danger and 'ritual' (a word used to cover non-realistic performance style), and to break down boundaries between audience and performers.[18]

By the late Seventies, however, the beginnings of a 'back-to-basics' backlash began to be felt.[19] The extremes of educational liberationism were blamed by some for what seemed a generation of amoral youth. As abuses of or misconceptions about the theories and values of the Sophists caused an end of the fifth-century reaction against the whole 'godless' movement, so, in the late Seventies and early Eighties, with their Thatcherite 'return to Victorian Values' mood, the liberal climate of the Sixties was blamed for producing a generation of parents and teachers who failed to set proper standards for their children. Remarking this parallel, Muir (Easterling & Muir, 1985, 191) sets as epigraph to a discussion of the challenge of the Sophists a quotation from the

report of a speech by Margaret Thatcher in March 1982, in which the Prime Minister blamed 'the fashionable theories and permissive claptrap' of the Sixties for the current 'denigration ... of old virtues of discipline and self-restraint'.

Bolton points out that in some ways the pendulum swing in education theory which occurred at this time was a salutary corrective to the defects of a child-centred drama which had concentrated on the individual ego and the individual experience. He argues that:

> in using drama to promote the individual's growth we have inadvertently distorted drama itself on two counts. The first is that drama is never about oneself; it is always concerned with something outside oneself. And secondly, drama is a social event not a solitary experience. It is one thing to claim that by sharing in a dramatic exploration of a theme I can learn something about myself in the process, and quite another to suggest the drama is for me and about me. [...] drama is not about self-expression. It is a group's expression, concerned with celebrating what people share, what man has in common with man.
> (Bolton, 1984, 46)

This indicates awareness of the power of drama to educate the individual for the good of the community and the fact that Bolton's is just one in a series of part-theoretical, part-practical books by practitioners on how to get the most out of the small amount of time allowed for drama in the school indicates that in the latter decades of the century serious efforts were being made to help train the trainers.

It cannot be said that the equivalent of Athenian civic and financial muscle was being put behind such efforts; drama was one subject not deemed necessary for inclusion in its own right, as distinct from English, in the National Curriculum being devised in the 1980s. It was, however, recognised as sufficiently important both for the community as a whole and for the individual that the Department of Education and Science dealt with it as a discrete subject when producing advisory and review documents.[20] Moreover, in the late Seventies and into the Eighties, Theatre-in-Education, as distinct from drama (used) in education, benefited from increased local government support, and many excellent TIE companies were able to work in schools with children ranging from lower primary to top secondary age. These companies usually comprised a mix of professional actors and actor/teachers, and were able both to involve children in

workshops and perform a play for them.[21] From this period dates the publication of a journal, under the auspices of the Standing Conference of Young Peoples' Theatre (SCYPT), serving an extended community of teachers, writers and actors involved in using drama in education across the full range of school age groups.

TIE retained the element of the subversive which, in the Fifties and Sixties, had made child-centred drama seem, to traditionalists, dangerous. Perhaps because of this, when cuts were made in the education budget in the early Nineties, TIE suffered from withdrawal of government finance. The playwright Edward Bond, himself a writer for TIE at secondary level, deplored in 1996 the withdrawal of government support from many TIE companies, protesting that drama as a channel for human imagination into creative rather than destructive activity was crucial for the good of society: 'At the heart of every *tyranny* there is ritual', he asseverated; 'at the heart of *democracy* there is drama.'[22] Bond, of course, was using those two words (in my italics) in a particularly twentieth-century understanding of them, which opposes an imagined ideal of 'democracy' against a power-abusing 'tyranny'.

At the age at which selected ephebes might have taken part in the great civic theatrical competition, twentieth-century young people may also move on to a public stage of performance. There had been a few designated Theatre Schools (mostly London-based) since the early decades of the century, but these were really for the training of actors in professional theatre. From the early Sixties, courses in drama and performance arts began to be offered at universities, and such degree courses might be taken by young people whose ultimate aim was directing, administrating, or even working with drama in education or as therapy.[23] Students who were at university studying other subjects might move into theatre from involvement in university theatre groups, by way of public performance opportunities such as the National Union of Students Drama Festival, or appearances at the Edinburgh Festival Fringe. In university theatre, there was a degree of autonomy, even inside the constraints of a drama curriculum, as well as the possibility for experimentation and innovation. Student drama was thus a halfway house - or

perhaps, more like a stretch of open water - between the limitations of school drama and the rough seas of professional, commercial theatre.

It might seem that, whatever the weight given to the process of doing drama in the classroom, or producing a theatre experience by way of TIE workshop or The School Play, the link between the boys of the dithyrambic choruses or the young chorusmen of the dramatic contests and their modern counterparts in schools and colleges in Britain is very tenuous. Yet what they crucially share is the experience of the two-fold functions of drama as a pedagogical tool: to educate the individual in certain disciplines, and to enable him or her to become part of the wider community as a privileged and publically valued member. It is not usual for such practitioners of theatre to fulfil that other function of drama as instrument of social education: that is, of creating a text which shows a community, either through myth or comic mimesis, its own image. This function is normally assumed to be the business of the playwright, but, as will be shown later, it has also recently been undertaken by young performers.

Use of Greek materials in twentieth-century education

The subject matter of Greek literature not only continues to be recreated in theatre, in poetry, and in novels, but it has also been deemed suitable for children as young as seven and eight. The current National Curriculum syllabus on the teaching of History at primary level requires, at Key Stage Two, one term to be given to study of Ancient Greece. It is apparent from the list of activities proposed for teachers by the syllabus that Greek culture is accessed very much from the angle of Olympic games; even the section dealing with the Battle of Marathon concentrates on its importance as the first example of a 40km. race, rather than as a high point of Athenian defence in the Persian Wars. However, study of legends and myth is also encouraged, and this must inevitably raise the subject of history as legend, and myth as history - a matter for ongoing interest for students of Greek drama as much as for historians ancient and modern. There is scope for teachers to use individual strengths, relating, for example, the children's experience of local institutions (theatres, gymnasiums, civic buildings) to Greek models.

Not surprisingly, it is at the TIE cutting edge of drama in education that subjects taken from Greek texts have been most radically explored. The *SCYPT Journal* 28 (August 1994) includes 'Keeping One Step Ahead of the Greeks' by Michelle Hesketh and Jo Underwood, both of the TIE team based at the Belgrade Theatre, Coventry, where TIE originated. The article gave an analysis of *Crossing the Line,* a workshop programme designed for 9-11 year-olds, exploring the idea of 'Siege' and based on the story of the fall of Troy. Originally, this programme was presented in schools with 10/11 year olds, but on 30/31 October 1993 was also offered as part of the Sixth Socialist Conference in Chesterfield where adult delegates worked with actors in role. TIE was indeed feeling under siege from the cutbacks of Thatcherite government, and from the demands of the National Curriculum, which, in its setting of objectives and assessment points, seemed to allow little room for imaginative exploration in drama.

Crossing the Line was not based on a specific text, though the influence of *Women of Troy* is obvious. More closely related to a text (*Iphigenia in Aulis*) was *The Iron Circle*, a programme for upper junior children devised by the Dukes TIE, Lancaster, and described tangentially by Ian Yeoman in his account of working with 'The Actor in Role' (*SCYPT Journal* 30, June 1995). The children operated as followers of Tiresias (one actor in role) and responded to actors in role as Agamemnon and Clytemnestra. However, this kind of activity does not require the participant children to be performers, nor are they being assessed or disciplined by normal authority figures; they are helped to inhabit the world of the myth or situation through their own imaginative responses. This programme, which, Yeoman says, is

> an exploration of the meaning available in the ancient myth, is only another statement of the extraordinary impact that theatre and drama can have as it engages children (safely) at both the level of their feelings and their intellect. A teacher may well have been heard to comment that they had never seen the child respond with such a level of confidence, sensitivity and integrity.
>
> (*SCYPT Journal* 30, 31)

These examples of TIE use of Greek themes are at a polar extreme from the kind of use made of Greek texts in tertiary, or even higher secondary education. There are well-established traditions of Greek language student productions at Cambridge and King's College London, and, at school

level, at Bradfield College. Sometimes these productions attempt authenticity, sometimes they go for equivalency. Productions of trusted and tried translations are given in schools and colleges, even when Greek is not in the syllabus, and versions of texts are performed by drama groups which may or may not include classics specialists - for example: Warwick University Drama Society's 1995 production of Berkoff's version of *Agamemnon* [OUdb90], or Sheffield University Dramatic Society's 1997 production [OUdb865] (its first performance in the U.K.) of Brendan Kennelly's *The Trojan Women.*

At each end of this scale of types of production is one extreme of a function of drama in education: in the primary workshop, the development of the child's imaginative and collaborative activity; in the university classics department Greek *theatron*, a display of mastery of disciplines. Somewhere between is an area of study of Greek plays in English translation by 14-18-year olds, since single plays feature in GCSE and 'A' Level courses in both classical studies and performance studies courses. Small-scale professional touring companies - like The Actors of Dionysus - rely to a large extent for their audiences on the school market, though their specialist nature ensures interest from scholars and academics too. The amateur company, Chloë Productions, run from the Institute of Classical Studies by Russell Shone, is similarly specialist, and, like The Actors of Dionysus, prides itself on producing its own new translations. However, because Chloë is an amateur company, and works mostly to present plays in the annual London Festival of Greek Drama, it is able to be more adventurous in its choice of texts (performing, for example, Shone's own 'reconstructions' of fragments) than companies which rely on the GCSE or 'A' Level student market.

Among the plays in translation which are most frequently studied by teenagers as part of an assessed course is Sophocles' *Antigone.* Since Steiner's seminal work[24] on Western culture's reception of the Antigone myth, in particular as retold by Sophocles, English theatres have continued to rediscover the play's relevance or resonances.

What *Antigone* Offers

Perhaps more than any other single Greek tragedy, *Antigone* seems to offer most possibilities, in work with young people, for relating age-old issues to contemporary situations. The stories of Oedipus, of Medea, of Prometheus, of Ajax, present studies of individual mythic characters, but may be less tractable for school study; *Women of Troy* is universally resonant but lacks a dramatically dynamic narrative; *Philoctetes* is psychologically interesting but problematic in its ending. *Antigone* offers a number of issues: it is the tragedy of the human under the heel of state (or the common cause held to ransom by the individual rebel?); it is about the clash of moral and political law (or the conflict of self and social interest?); it is about the self-destructive nature of families (or about family love?); it is about two wills in conflict; it is about the dilemma of the woman who will not play ball. It is also, to modern eyes, a well-crafted tragedy, containing the element of surprise at the end when, having watched from a point of relative objectivity the anticipated tragedy of Antigone, the audience finds itself identifying emotionally with the tragic figure of Creon, who, like Oedipus at the end of *Oedipus the King*, learns wisdom and humility too late and is not granted the merciful release of death.

Because it does raise such a number of issues about the individual in society at a time of change, the play seems particularly fruitful for study with young people who, in adolescence, are acutely aware of their own relationships, loyalties and feelings about authority. David Taylor, in his text-book for Classical Studies courses for 16+ students, uses *Antigone* as the text by which he explains the procedures of Greek theatre performance - the play's mythical background, the use of Chorus, Messenger speech, possible response of audience, and so on.[25] As young people see her, Antigone is doubly disenfranchised by being a woman and being young. The crippling burden of being a daughter of Oedipus and Jocasta - though it is mentioned in her first speech and spelled out and intensified by Ismene's speech at 49ff. - has to be explicated for them if they have no knowledge of the background to the story. The issue of whether one should put loved ones before state may seem very simple to young people for whom *philoi* means peers as well as families, but they can be shown that Sophocles complicates the question, first by making the audience question Antigone's motives, and finally by making it empathise with the man who has

made his own decision about who are his *philoi*, and having put community before family, is at last bitterly to regret his decision.

They may ask whether we can now take Antigone's devotion to her brother as simply sibling love, or whether Sophocles did not indeed intend the suggestion of incest (the second generation of incest) at which Antigone's 'I shall lie with him, a loved one with a loved one' (73) hints. And if this is not the case, they will still need to question how Antigone can put all consideration of her devoted betrothed aside, not even mentioning him if the line at 572 is assigned to Ismene and not to Antigone.[26] Young people will note that, even though this is an arranged marriage, Haemon's action is like Romeo's; he cannot live on without his love. However, Haemon's impassioned rejection of his father in favour of loyalty to his betrothed (another choice between *philoi*) is followed by the chorus's third stasimon of Respect For Aphrodite (781-800). This brief lyric makes it clear that, for the chorus, Haemon's devotion to Antigone is to be regretted, not, as a modern audience might think, admired, since it is love which has 'stirred up the kindred strife between these men' (794). This sets the tone for Antigone's entry as the bride of death; a death in a sense self-inflicted, since her choice between *philoi* has put dead brother before living lover. Her very name suggests that she is *against* the role of wife; that she refuses to act the role which would give her protection and, amazing for a daughter of Oedipus, status. Is her unacknowledged motive for her disobedience really to try to become what no woman acting according to gender role can be: heroic? Is her reaction to the chorus's lines about the glory of sharing the fate of a goddess by being imprisoned in a rock as extreme as it is because that comment has touched a tender spot? Perhaps she *is* conscious of trying to be more than a mere woman, and, like other 'heroic' women (for example, Medea), fears being laughed at or being a figure of reproach. To allow a brother to remain unburied would be shameful, but the course Antigone takes results in rather more than simply avoiding shame; it will bring her *kleos* - and she knows this.[27]

Against Antigone's will - whether it is seen as self-destructive and life-refusing or rebelliously affirmative of the claims of *philia* - is set Creon's. Whereas a simplified or schematic account of

the plot would make Creon, as representative of repressive forces of law and order, an obvious villain in the eyes of a modern, Western-culturally-determined adolescent, even elementary investigation of his character turns him into potential tragic victim. This approach is quite distinct from consideration of the political arguments on his side. These arguments in themselves are fruitful areas for discussion with young people, particularly if the teacher gives a context for them. For example: the story is set in a state in which a particularly nasty civil war has just come to an end; what will it be necessary for the head of state to do in order to re-establish order and end vendettas? Think of Bosnia; of Zaire; of S. Africa. Although the play presents a series of agonistic encounters, it is a piece of theatre, not a forensic exercise, and in theatre the audience does not have to give a verdict either way; it can have its cake and eat it. Simon Goldhill, noting how commentators tend to talk of the play in terms of polarities (Hegel seeing it as dialectic conflict, and Reinhardt in 1979 contrasting 'youthfulness and unselfishness to the point of sacrifice' with the 'blindness of age'), says that when we read *Antigone* we make one-sided moral judgements, and makes the further point that a 'reading' of the play - as relating to a particular situation - will also tend to result in a bias to one or other end of the scale of sympathy.[28]

In the reading given a play in performance, it must be that individual productions will show which side the director has taken in the dialectic conflict, but in the classroom students of the play-as-play (not just as dialectical text) have the chance to explore a number of readings and to hold them co-existently in mind. This is not to say that their approach is like that of eighteenth-century critics of Shakespeare, who felt that the best place for hearing Shakespeare's verse was in one's own head, in the quiet of the study; there is a middle route between reading Sophocles' words on the page and insisting on any one reading presented in any one production as being definitive. The chance modern theatre in England gives to compare and make inter-textual references between different productions of the same text (even in the same translation) is one of its richnesses. It is the modern equivalent of Athenian theatre's capacity to present the same myth told in a variety of ways by different playwrights.

The relevance of conflict between the laws of gods and the laws of men may not be immediately apparent to late-twentieth-century students, nor may the idea of denying proper rites of passage into death seem so terrible. Certainly students need to be given the cultural context for the situation, but they are not required to identify with Antigone's feelings of revulsion and anger at Creon's order in fifth-century Athens terms. It is enough for them to find a contemporary equivalent; a situation in which the treatment offered a dead human body offends against instinctive feelings of propriety or morality, and constitutes, in its symbolism, a crime against humanity.[29] In a lecture given in conjunction with an Actors of Dionysus touring production of *Antigone* in 1994 [OUdb836], Jasper Griffin chose as one of his examples of modern corpse abuse the treatment by the people of Iran of the remains of American soldiers: '[they] came and gloated over them, and picked up the bones and laughed, and we experienced a tremendous feeling of outrage that a fundamental human law had been violated'.[30] The questions about authority - of whether 'fundamental human law' is the same as 'the laws of gods', and whether the 'laws of men' should ever be given precedence over any other laws - are perhaps more easily debated by children now with respect to revenge than to funeral rites. But if the relative claims of laws of gods and laws of men as they relate to the nature of authority in the community is less strong an issue for us than for Sophocles' audience, the issue of the male/female agon is much stronger.

Creon uses 'woman' consistently as a term of abuse; he will not allow a woman to rule in his kingdom; no woman will get the better of him or make him bend the law. When Haemon opposes him, Creon contemptuously accuses him of speaking like a woman, and taking the woman's side. By the third episode, the agon between Creon and Haemon, the audience has begun to scent the rejection of stereotypes and a juggling with gender roles; that Antigone aspires to masculine courage and devotion, to assert which she must reject her woman-ness; that Creon 's repressive intransigence borders on the hysterical. Haemon's attempts to reason simply look like softness to Creon, since he himself, anxious to be seen the strong ruler and lawgiver, is afraid to show any weakening of resolution. The audience would pick up on Haemon's image of the tree bending before the storm, the sailor slackening the sails to avoid destruction (712-7),

and remember how Creon in the previous episode (474-8) had used the same idea, but with different images - over-tempered iron snapping, a wild horse haltered and mastered - to speak contemptuously of Antigone's pride. As Creon describes Antigone's wilful pride as wrong in her, a woman, so his wilful and rigid confidence in his own decisions is described by Haemon as wrong in a man who wishes to be considered wise.

It is not, of course, simply a question of the oppressed female defying male power. Throughout the play, Antigone is concerned with her ability to go beyond the limits of female role. She first asks Ismene's help to move Polyneices' body, and the prologue scene between Antigone and Ismene sets out the debate about resistance, much as Sophocles was to do some thirty years later in *Elektra* in the scene between Elektra and Chrysothemis. In both cases, the line of least resistance is propounded as the sensible course, but good sense is yoked with the limitations of being a woman. Ismene argues that it is not for women to fight against the rule of men; Chrysothemis says that she is not strong enough to show her hatred for Clytemnestra and Aegisthus, and that she prefers to keep a low profile in the safety of the women's quarters. In both instances, the case for passivity has to be put forward in order to be beaten down by the heroine. When forced to act alone, Antigone revises her plan and gives the corpse token burial and ritual libations. These are acts which require, not physical strength, but courage and determination, or, as the Chorus describes it, 'daring' ('advancing to the limit of daring', 853). But if Antigone is, as she sees herself, the champion of the law of gods against the tyrannical injustice of man, she *must* take on a more than mere woman's role. She refuses the passive role of obedience - which she accuses the Chorus of taking through fear - and asserts her refusal through action. In order to say 'yes' to the needs of her brother's spirit, she has to say 'no' to the living men with power over her life. She is not, then, an obvious role model for positive feminism (however much late twentieth-century interpreters might like to assert she is), for what she does is not, in Athenian tragedy terms, the action of a strong woman, but of a maladjusted one. What she <u>does</u> appear to express is something similar to the resistance of early twentieth-century feminism towards male power exerted in either the political or the personal arena. Not

only does she refuse to be confined by the dictates of mere men, but she also refuses to be confined by male definition of what it is to be a woman.

1984 and after

1984 is the year in which Steiner's *Antigones* was published. Though he stated at the outset that this was not to be a merely chronological-systematic account of the use of the Antigone motif in Western culture, since this would be repetitive of others' work, it was inevitable that he should survey, in his cross-textual approach, productions and versions of the play up to that time. His main intent, avowed in the Preface, was to study 'the interactions between a major text and its interpretations through time'. This process of opening out a series of readings for comparison was to have effects, not only on the way the text might be approached in the future, but also on the way it, and any other play which had acquired a performance-, and so a reading-history over the years, might be approached by directors or adaptors. It was reading Steiner's book which was to prompt Wendy Greenhill, the RSC's Education Officer in 1991 to decide to make Antigone's story the basis for a project involving young people from all over Britain; a project which was not aiming at one 'closed' reading of Sophocles' play in performance, but at a multiplicity of readings of the story, using the imagination and personal experience of young people. Educational drama, as it had evolved from the movements of the Sixties and Eighties, was to join with the cross-culturalism of Steiner.

Nationalising Antigone

Before considering the Antigones Project, it is necessary to reflect on how English theatre, after that important date of 1984, had performed the source play, *Antigone,* and in order to establish a contrast with English theatre's productions, to consider, albeit briefly, instances of other national responses.

Antigone (1944) by Jean Anouilh and *The Riot Act* (1984) by Tom Paulin both set up readings of Sophocles' play which seemed to equate the rule of Creon and his laws with the rule of

occupying forces: respectively, Nazi German and British. While this rather simplistic view of what was being attempted by each writer might not have done credit to his possible intentions, the idea that Sophocles' *Antigone* was about resistance to subjugation gained credence. Later English productions, as shall be seen, varied in the extent to which they accepted this cliché.

In 1922, Jean Cocteau had created his own innovatory version of the play, using stripped down, colloquial language, but adopting a style of presentation which expressed his belief in a need for theatricalism. The Chorus was a single voice, disembodied, coming from a hole in the scenery, and speaking very loudly and quickly; the actors wore semi-transparent masks, on which stylised features were embroidered in white and through which the actors' faces could just be discerned; the actors wore the costumes over black bathing dresses, and in the Antigone/Creon *agon*, the stage direction calls for the actors to stand with their foreheads touching. Cocteau's intention in using such quasi-absurdist theatricality was to shock audiences into awareness of the 'reality' of the play. When Anouilh recreated the play some twenty years later, he also used the realism of colloquial prose, but with an understated 'modern' realism of presentation.

Anouilh's *Antigone* seemed to present a metaphor for occupied France's refusal to submit, but his version was allowed performance in Paris because Creon's case appeared to be sufficiently strongly put to escape censorship by the German forces of occupation. The fact of the play's symbolic canonisation of the resister made going to a performance of it in occupied Paris an act of solidarity with the forces of resistance; there was in the complicity of that act a force which gave the play a special vitality. But, Dickinson argues:

> Anouilh's attitude toward life - one of nonacceptance, rejection of all established religious and cultural values, permanent revolt - was already familiar to Parisians. What they had actually been responding to, apart from their own attributions of meaning, was not a disguised call to struggle and revolt against their conquerors, but an expression of a total rejection of life, a revolt against the fact of existence itself.[31]

This, Anouilh's actual message, according to Dickinson, made the play something of an embarrassment for the American producers who bought this French war-time smash hit for American consumption, and they adapted it so that the political motivation for Antigone's

resistance was accentuated. When Laurence Olivier directed the English translation with the Old Vic company in 1949, he himself played the Chorus (informal, insouciant but exact) and the fragilely beautiful Vivien Leigh, who had attained cinema stardom before the war as life-affirming Scarlett O'Hara in *Gone With the Wind*, was cast as (in the Chorus's words) 'that little thin creature, Antigone'. So the negativity of Antigone's 'no' to life (not, as in Sophocles, to Creon's dictat) and of the matter-of-fact cynicism of the Chorus were corrected for the post-war English audiences by the romantic gauze cast over the play by its two stars.

For Irish playwrights, however, the play really did offer a paradigm of the nobility of resistance by an occupied or oppressed body. In the years after the publication of Steiner's *Antigones*, both Brendan Kennelly and Tom Paulin wrote their versions of the play, each revealing the characteristic concerns of its writer. Paulin, writing *The Riot Act* for the Derry-based Field Day company, was concerned with the political implications of the play, and Kennelly, writing for the Peacock Theatre in Dublin, with the male/female conflict as expressed by the warring demands of family love and state control.

In her book on the work of Field Day, Richtarik (1994) gives an account of Paulin's feelings about the responses to *Antigone* of the intellectual and writer Conor Cruise O'Brien. Paulin castigated O'Brien's criticism of 'Antigone and her understudies' in *States of Ireland* (1972), saying that blaming activist resisters like Bernadette Devlin for the violence since 1968 was to absolve 'Creon' - the Unionist government - of all reponsibility. Though Paulin may have intended to correct this view to a Hegelian dialectic between opposed 'rights', critics identified the oversimplification of Creon into Ulster bureaucrat as the play's weak point; it was felt that Paulin had localised, without universalising, Sophocles. The English drama critic for the *Guardian*, Michael Billington, found Paulin's version 'political melodrama', showing 'an Ulster demagogue ... receiving his come-uppance', and Fintan O'Toole, writing for the *Sunday Tribune*, noted that making Creon's first speech 'a brilliant parody of a Northern Ireland Office political functionary appealing for public support ... immediately draws the theatrical sting of the play'.[32]

The actor playing Creon was the director, Stephen Rea, whose political sympathies were enough well known to make the fact of his playing the part an ironic condemnation of the character.

Both the French and Irish versions adapted the original play; the playwrights found resonances either in personal philosophy or in their own political beliefs or experience. In each case, Antigone seemed (whatever the writers' intentions) to be a heroic resistance fighter, while Creon's tragic predicament was less remarked. He personified not, as in the original, the leader-protector of a city state until recently torn by internecine strife, but the representative of an occupying authority.

A third notable response to the play's chief *agon* was Athol Fugard's 1973 play *The Island*, which involves the rehearsal for a performance in prison at Robben Island. In *Long Walk to Freedom* (1994, 541), Nelson Mandela recalls the occasion which Fugard dramatises, and while he describes Creon - the part he took himself - as 'at the outset ... sincere and patriotic', Mandela concludes his chapter with the idealistic aphorism that 'inflexibility and blindness ill become a leader, for a leader must temper justice with mercy. It was Antigone who symbolized our struggle', he continues, 'she was, in her own way, a freedom fighter, for she defied the law on the grounds that it was unjust'.

In fact, Fugard uses the event in a much more complex way in *The Island*. 'John' and 'Winston' play 'Creon' and 'Antigone' respectively. Winston resists playing Antigone, the role in which John has cast him for the scene they are to perform in the prison concert, on the grounds that he will simply be a laughing stock; he will be degraded in the eyes of his peers by playing the woman's part. 'I'd rather run the whole day for Hodoshe [the prison guard]. At least I know where I stand with him. All *he* wants is to make me a 'boy' ... not a bloody woman.' (60) While John is absent from their cell, Winston resolves not to play the part: 'If he wants a woman in the cell he must send for his wife [...] I didn't walk with those men and burn my bloody passbook in front of that police station, and have a magistrate send me here for life so that he [John] can dress me up like a woman and make a bloody fool of me' (63). When John is notified of his

release in three months, Winston's feelings of resentment, bereavement and despair are expressed in his fantasising about what freedom will mean to John: he will be joyously received by his family and friends, and he will drink beer and have sex. He will thus be able to reaffirm his identity as part of a community, as a human being, and more particularly, his sexual identity as a man. Freedom is being a man; imprisonment deprives one of identity, even of sexual identity. Winston does play Antigone in the Creon/Antigone *agon*, but delivers Antigone's final lines without her wig, '*confronting the audience as Winston, not Antigone*' as the stage directions note. So, although the play is obviously about the imprisonment of black South Africans under a white tyranny, the reading of *Antigone* which the prisoners give reflects back to Athenian concern with male/female metaphors about control, freedom and identity. Antigone is more than just resistance fighter or voice of protest in this interpretation.

Antigone in post-1984 England

Although in the second half of the twentieth century English theatre recognised no home-grown equivalent for the situations of occupation, despotism or racial oppression which had made *Antigone* seem appropriate for re-creation elsewhere, the play itself, in translation, remained a popular choice for repertory and student theatres. Though dealing with the issue of individual protest against the demands of the state, it seemed non-controversial. Directors continued to present the play as part of repertory programmes, recognising its strength as a dramatic piece but not always realising that strength on stage. To some directors, the way to show its continuing 'relevance' seemed to be to put it into modern dress.

Perhaps it was the arrival of 1984[33] which made Peter Gill and John Burgess at the National Theatre decide to emphasise the political aspect of the play by putting it into a modern setting [OUdb107]. Designer Alison Chitty devised a scheme in which grey predominated - grey stone portico for the *skene*, grey suits for the chorus of elders, pinstripe suit for Creon. Rosalind Carne, reviewing for *Plays and Players*, found the overall effect disappointing; 'superficially slick and ... profoundly unmoving'.[34] She remarks that, whereas she had seen 'rough but impasssioned student productions of the Greeks that churned up smothered emotions with

extraordinary force', she found Jane Lapotaire's Antigone 'surprisingly conventional'; cool, and with the great speeches sounding 'heavily rehearsed', that is, laboured and lacking in passion. For Carne, Peter Sproule as Creon was a 'stolid dummy ... who provokes only yawns'. Admittedly, the theatre space chosen for this production was the National's studio theatre, the Cottesloe, so it might have been unrealistic to expect a production style other than scaled-down, low key domestic realism. However, in the same season, and in the same theatre, the National were exciting audiences with a theatrically inventive version of Orwell's *Animal Farm,* so proving that political allegory performed in a studio space could be exciting theatre. This production of *Antigone* focused, not on theatrical effects nor the cross-textual resonances of this play for 1984, but on the psychological realism of the characters, and in this area, there were undoubtedly successes. Carne singled out for special praise the Haemon/Creon episode, where 'stern paternal authority confronts the overwhelming human values of the son'. What is surprising is that Jane Lapotaire, an actress capable of febrile intensity as well as stoical languor, could fail to engage sympathy as Antigone. But even if she had done so and had conveyed the intensity of 'rough, impassioned ... churned up emotions ' which that reviewer had experienced from student productions, *Antigone* is not a one-character play, nor does it gain from being played as a family drama. It demands to be produced in a way which convinces an audience of the reality of the story's setting in a dangerously unsettled city state. In this production, it seems, the evocation of that imaginary Thebes was not realised, because not attempted.

In 1986, Don Taylor was commissioned by BBCTV to direct his own translation of the Theban plays for a trilogy production [OUdb105], and considerable resources were clearly put into this prestige venture. The design scheme used huge portrait banners of Creon and an overpowering, almost subterranean, set with massive double doors at the top of a wide, steep, and immensely high staircase which effectively dwarfed the human characters. The effect, with helmeted guards attending Creon, and a chorus of gentlemanly but intimidated Elders, was indeed of a '1984' police state. There were plenty of 'extras', with actors of considerable note filling almost minor roles. That Sir John Gielgud had been cast as Tiresias gave the character a beyond-the-text *gravitas,* and made John Shrapnel's Creon's accusation of him as a gain-seeker even more

hubristic. Although the portrait banners, the guards, the distinction between Creon (and Haemon's) military dress and the Chorus's dress coats and cravats did convincingly set up the atmosphere of political unrest and civil insecurity, the production also foregrounded the question 'who are my *philoi*?' which is implicitly posed to each of the main characters. Mike Gwilym's Haemon was a convincing counterpart to Juliet Stevenson's Antigone, since it was possible to believe of him that he too would commit suicide rather than compromise his commitment. The first section of his *agon* with Creon really did seem to be fuelled, not by political acuteness or a desire to rescue his wife-to-be, but by a love for his father. The warmth of his appeals to Creon intensified first the tragedy of his choice in favour of wife rather than father, and ultimately Creon's tragedy when he discovers that he has lost all his family.

John Shrapnel gave Creon the breadth of character which can be neglected when the play is seen in terms of political dialectic. He started as genially self-congratulatory about his acumen and firmness of purpose, and progressed through tight-lipped dictator to nervily vulnerable father. Creon's perpetual accusations that the world around him is on the take may indicate a puritanical obsession with financial corruption as the root of civil evil, but they also gave Shrapnel a cue to play the *tyrannos* as a tax inspector manqué; a little man, but a hitherto competent bureaucrat, catapulted into a world of larger-than-life heroes and villains - a point nicely made by shots of the human-sized figure of Creon dwarfed by his own portraits. The decision to give him a costume change between episodes meant that he could be impressively commanding in smart silver-grey uniform and sweeping cloak in episode one; soldier-commander rather than king in episodes two and three; and change into a black cloak after the sentence of death had been passed. The final shot pulled back from his slumped, traumatised figure huddled in the chair of state.

Unlike the design for the National production (in which Jane Lapotaire was austerely swathed in a timeless headscarf coif), June Hudson's costume design for BBCTV stressed the softness, the vulnerability, of the female characters; Ismene and Antigone had Minoan-style crimped hair and eye make-up, and all the women wore crinkled Indian cotton dresses in various colours.

Antigone appeared for her farewell scene in a white dress, so underlining the bridal references. That no major distinction in costume style was made between Antigone and Ismene in the prologue scene made a point about this reading of Antigone; she was not being played (despite what Creon says about her having been mad from birth) as an oddity, different from other women, but as a normal, loving daughter and sister driven to abnormal resistance in the pursuit of normal duties. However, Don Taylor's interpolation into Ismene's speech at 50ff. of 'How can we fight against the *institutionalised strength of the male state*?' [my italics] coloured the audience's feelings about what might, in this world, be said to be normal female actions. What was very much in the actors' minds at the time of production, it appears, was the case of Foreign Office clerk Sarah Tisdall, the Cruise weapons 'whistle blower', who was jailed in 1984 for acting according to her conscience.[35] Practitioners in English theatre of the second half of this century have not needed, unlike wartime French or Northern Irish adaptors, to use *Antigone* as a parable of occupation. In concentrating on divisions within the state, the family and even within the individual, with regard to identity, it could be said that English versions are thus closer to the Athenian original.

When Andrew Manley directed Don Taylor's translation for Harrogate Theatre in 1994 [OUdb96], the idea of 'the enemy within' was established by extensive use of modern technology; the Chorus (one man, one woman) read their speeches from autocues, as if newsreaders or journalists; cameras and T.V. screens suggested a Big Brother state in which 'the mechanics of media presentation can be used to impose an official version of events'.[36] This use of the organs of modern mass media, which can also be the tools of mind control, was not just a modish attempt to show 'how relevant and modern those ancient Greeks are', but a legitimate mediation of one concern of the play, for Antigone, Haemon and Creon all make reference to what the people of Thebes think. Taylor's translation freely interprets the Sentry as a richly comic character, and gives him colloquialisms such as: 'he scared us all shitless!', 'A right mouthful you gave me', and ' ... 'ere I am again, as the comic said', so that there is a real suggestion of lower as well as upper levels of the society.

The publicity copy for this production had a headline 'Ancient Greece Meets Amnesty International!', and indeed, Taylor's version extends Creon's threats to the sentry (308-9) into suggestions of recognised techniques of torture: the sentry will be 'kept standing, beaten across the feet, the whole repertoire of techniques in which we excel so much'. This could allow the design to suggest military control of the state - as in Greece under the colonels in the 1967-74 period - or a police state under a dictator, but in either case the implication is that Creon is committing Human Rights abuses. Young audiences would have no problem recognising this but might be puzzled as to why the play does not end with Antigone's exit to death since the play is, they might presume, about her. A production which does not bring out the complexities of the situation, and which reads Creon as the bad guy and Antigone as the martyr to the cause will fail both theatrically and as a stimulus for thought and discussion.

The RSC was well experienced in presenting multiple play productions[37] when in 1991 it commissioned Timberlake Wertenbaker to adapt the Theban plays for performance in the Swan Theatre [OUdb103]. This cycle was destined for performance in a theatre space very different from the RSC's Main House theatre. The Swan's thrust stage and galleried auditorium permit a close relationship between actors and audience, and this production allowed points of characterisation to come across. However, because the director (Adrian Noble) and the designer (Ultz) had decided on a non-realistic, symbolic scheme, a high level of theatrical inventiveness and spectacle was also possible. Ilona Sekacz's atmospheric music and sounds, almost Japanese in style, provided background accompaniment to speeches and sung passages, and the chorus of Elders for the *Antigone,* with their old men masks and walking sticks, were choreographed inventively. The Chorus speeches were part sung, part intoned, and split between solo and unison voices.

Although the acting style was naturalistic during dialogue exchanges, a number of devices heightened audience awareness of theatre, of 'otherness' from real life. Instead of a floor cloth, fine dark earth covered the central rectangle of the stage so that as more and more actors crossed it, it became more and more disturbed - suggesting the token dusting of earth over Polyneices'

body. In the first stasimon, the Greek words were sung in counterpoint with the English translation, giving a liturgical feel to the piece, and throughout the play, occasional Greek words occurred to intensify emotional outbursts: '*oimoi*' or '*pheu*'. Proper names were given a supposedly 'ancient Greek' pronounciation - 'Zeus' was 'Zay-os'. In her farewell scene, Antigone's speeches were a mix of spoken and sung lines, and she moved from a slow, staggering dance, her arms tied in front of her, to be cradled by the chorus. In this way, without attempting anything approaching 'authenticity', the production suggested an alien, not a modern culture, and stressed the theatricality of the form while asserting a psychological reality in the characters. Wertenbaker's translation did not exploit the comic potential of the sentry, nor attempt modern resonances; it was self-consciously an ensemble performance, not a case study or a political parable.

Writing in the RSC Spring 1992 magazine, Oliver Taplin singled out the playing of the chorus for special praise, asserting, perhaps a mite dramatically, that 'This chorus unlocked ways of responding to suffering, and ways of facing up to the dark of life'. In the same article, Taplin signalled the RSC's planned production of Derek Walcott's *The Odyssey: A Stage Version* [OUdb845] which opened at The Other Place on July 2 of that year.[38] The English centre for Shakespeare production was turning ancient Greek. What was not known in the spring of 1992 was that by the autumn of that year, the RSC's Education Department would have used the *Antigone* section of the Wertenbaker version of the Theban Plays as stimulus for a nationwide project to involve young people between fifteen and twenty-two in devising and performing versions of the Antigone story.

The 'Antigones' Project'

The 'Antigones Project' was the brainchild of Wendy Greenhill, the RSC's Education officer, but it was only made possible through a Sainsbury's Award for Arts Education grant of £100,000. This was playing *choregos* on a major scale. The project was subtitled 'Language in Action', and extended over half a year. Six writers and directors worked with school and college students in

six separate areas of the U.K.: Scotland, County Durham, Cheshire, Solihull, Newham (London), and Cornwall. In some cases (Scotland and Cheshire), students read the text of Wertenbaker's play before they started to formulate their own version; in others (London and Solihull), they deliberately did not. In no case did a group produce a slavish retelling of the Sophocles narrative, and the range of linguistic and theatrical approaches was extremely wide.

In Scotland and Cornwall, as perhaps might be expected, the issue of national, regional or clan community was singled out. Lara Jane Bunting's *The Grave of Every Hope* [OUdb97] was set in pre-Christian Scotland where the death of the heroine, Alban, seems synonymous with the loss of identity for the tribe of Locar, who are forbidden their native language. In Cornwall, Nick Darke set his *Hell's Mouth* [OUdb100] on which his group had worked with local director Michael Shepherd, in the year 2243 when the heroine, Antigone, is an activist in the Mebyon Kernow Cornish Nationalist Movement. (This play included a Chorus of Second Home Owners' Wives and their bitches, so opportunities for humour were not lost.) Rod Wooden's *Anti/Gone* [OUdb102] used the group's experience of riots in Newcastle the previous year, and satirized elements of contemporary life, particularly different aspects of mass media. The two groups which did not work outwards from the text were actually those which produced the two versions closest to the original: Stephen Bill's *Cassie: A Modern Tragedy* [OUdb99] with the Midlands group, and Louise Page's *Royal Blood Bath 3* [OUdb98] in Newham, which translated Creon into a tabloid-editor and had Antigone ending up as a bag lady carrying Sainsbury's carrier bags - an in-joke reference to the Project's sponsors. Noel Greig's *He Is Ours* (Cheshire) [OUdb101] had the unnamed heroine receive, at her eighteenth birthday party celebration, the news that her long-lost brother has died that day - by implication, of AIDS.

In all cases, what usually presents a problem in modern theatre - the chorus - was embraced as an opportunity to use numbers of students, not to rely, in the manner of old-style School Play Production, on a few able drama specialists. As always with drama in education, the process was of paramount importance, but participants knew they had to produce a creditable and watchable performance and that they would be on show, not only to friends and family in their own

communities, but at the Antigones Project Weekend in Stratford-upon-Avon before any members of the public - sympathetic or not - who cared to come. With some 24 - 30 young people involved in each production, the numbers of performers would have been similar to the number of chorus members required for the tragedy and comedy days at the Dionysia, but unlike the chorusmen, these young actors had to travel away from their own community to perform in a recognised centre for theatre, and, of course, it hardly needs to be said that a large proportion of these actors - and certainly all the 'Antigones' - were female. Whereas three of the finished plays were subsequently performed by other companies, Wendy Greenhill felt that what was most valuable in the project was not the texts but the collaborative process of making theatre from an ancient narrative which carried threads of issues recognisable and important to young people living in Britain at that time. The whole was greater than the sum of the parts, in terms of performance and individual texts.[39] What Betty Caplan, reviewing the project in *Plays and Players*, January 1993, lamented was that because of cut-backs on funding of advisory and liaison posts in drama, the networks and collaboration begun in 1992 were already, by 1993, beginning to crumble.[40]

Antigone as a youth icon

Why *Antigone*? In part, it was because the success of the RSC's production of the Theban plays suggested to Greenhill that a project involving nationwide collaboration between theatre practitioners and young people might work better using the stimulus of a (to schoolchildren) relatively unknown Greek story than using Shakespeare, about whose work students might carry too much negative pre-conceptual baggage. Greenhill herself had worked with Greek texts in schools and colleges, producing a version of the *Oresteia* (using masks and percussive music) at Hereford College of Art, and had been particularly interested by Steiner's approach to *Antigone*. But the major attraction of this play in particular was its complex thematic mix; certainly the ethical dialectic is important, but perhaps more appealing to a post-Post-Feminist generation are the questions we ask about Antigone: is she a martyr or a madwoman? how important is the idea of image - Antigone's self-image, how she is perceived by the other characters in the play

(including the chorus), and how the audience, now, perceives her? Further questions the play might raise are: do young people now view her as a hero(ine), an admirable role model, or a freak? Does the fact that she rates dead brother above living husband mean that she is incestuous, or is she showing, before the fact, a feminist desire to assert personal identity through blood relationships rather than accept a nominal identity through a husband?

Depending on the reason for studying *Antigone*, adolescents will vary in their need or desire to know about the context of the play and the circumstances of its creation and performance. As always with revivals of Greek plays, modern directors cannot assume in their audiences the shared knowledge which original playwrights could be confident of in their audiences. Whereas it may not be so important for them to know, for example, that this play was actually the earliest of Sophocles' three plays about Oedipus and his family to be written (not the last, as might be suggested by the now conventional playing of the three as a trilogy), or the precise degree to which Sophocles' Creon is contravening contemporary (fifth-century Athenian) practice regarding burial,[41] it would be important for all young students to appreciate Antigone's peculiar status as daughter of a shameful relationship, princess child of a disgraced but tragic father, and sister to both the aggressor and the defender of Thebes in the just-ended civil war. She is unmarried, but as the wife-designate of the son of the king, she stands to regain respectability through him, as long as she accepts this role. She is disempowered by a multiplicity of factors, and not the least is her gender.

Another point of which young students of *Antigone* as a performance text may not be aware, though it is pertinent to the use of the play in education, is that as *parthenos*, Antigone is a particularly tricky creature for Creon to deal with. The *parthenos* had a special value: as a virgin, she was a wholesome seedbed for future citizens, but she was still in the untamed state of female nature. The image of the girl-child suggested by the Brauron ritual is of a wild young creature which, if allowed to grow to adulthood in its present guise, will be dangerous for its ferocity and strength. The 'little bears' of Artemis still operated in cuddly mode, but would need transformation into a civilised human form before they could find their place in society as a

numphe, graduating finally to fully-socialised *gunaikes,* whose duties would include producing new *parthenoi* and presenting to them a civilised role model.[42]

What constituted 'civilised behaviour', however, was to some extent still in the process of revision, and from the time of Solon's restrictions on over-extravagant displays of mourning, increased emphasis was to be put on the loyalty of the citizen and his wife to *polis* rather than to clan. As a result, women's role at funerals became limited, with only direct kinswomen being permitted to mourn at the bier, and with the start of the Peloponnesian War, there was increased reason to play down lamentation for the individual and to exalt the generalised type of the hero-slain.[43] A *parthenos* would not expect to achieve glory for dying in battle, but the type of the virgin-victim who merits praise and fame for accepting the role of sacrifice for the good of the community - for saying 'yes', in fact - was by the end of the Wars a recognisable one. Euripides' Iphigenia in *Iphigenia in Aulis* (like his virgin-youth Menoeceus in *The Phoenician Women*) acquiesces in the will of the gods and the demands of men.

Already by the putative date of Sophocles' writing *Antigone*, then, the individual was beginning to be subsumed by and comprehended in the idea of the body politic. Creon brings his personal tragedy on himself by pretending to the same kind of delusions of wisdom and all-knowledge which contributed to Oedipus's downfall, and by refusing to take advice and share the responsibilities of government with others. When, in the fifth century, heroes were needed, they would be provided by the state; hero-cults depersonalised the virtues they applauded by attributing them to mythic, not to recent, named and privately 'owned' individuals. Antigone seems to be expressing the value system of a past age when she talks of loyalty to kin and to the laws of gods, and, moreover, is consciously invoking an heroic mode of action by her refusal to accept the rule of (male) law. The rituals she enacts - of burial and mourning, and of procession to marriage/deathbed - are indeed rituals in which, as woman, she might be expected to have a part, but in both cases they become Antigone's protests against male ordering of female behaviour. In saying 'no!' to Creon's decree, she says 'yes' to death, and in accepting death she refuses to fulfil her role as woman.

Young people working on the play now would be right, then, to see Antigone as a heroic figure; a disempowered victim who retains one last freedom, the capacity to refuse to conform. Or, indeed, they could view her as a protestor against Establishment forces of law, order, and authority parental or pedagogical. It is certainly the case that (as Antigone herself shows), acting out rebellion or non-social behaviour in recognisable rituals is a way of expressing refusal to conform. The extent to which those recognisable rituals are acceptable to 'civilised' society determines whether the expression of refusal is *in fact* an act of rebellion or merely a device through which potentially anti-social elements are channelled and defused. The students who took part in the Antigones Project may have felt that they were fulfilling personal dreams and ambitions, even transgressing some sort of boundaries in acting a play which they had helped to create about a girl-rebel; and in performing, though amateurs and minors, in the inner sanctum of professional English theatre. In fact, they were being shown, through this experience, the importance of sublimating the individual to the community, and the rituals of writing, improvisation, rehearsal, dressing up and performing were all part of a way of using the natural and potentially disruptive energies of young adulthood. The critical reception of the performances - appreciative, laudatory, inevitably slightly patronising - revealed the extent to which the whole exercise (whatever the intentions of its instigators) had been given approval by the adult world of parents, teachers, youth workers, educational theorists, newspaper critics.[44] Like the fifth-century Athenians, late twentieth-century educators of adolescents have a vested interest in making theatre in all its forms serve the state, not the individual.

NOTES

1 See Goldhill in Winkler & Zeitlin (1990), 126-7, and Hall in Easterling (1997), 124-6 on tragedy as a 'democratic' art form.

2 For example, Herodotus, *The Histories,* VI. 27, and the mention of a school of 120 children in Chios 'learning their letters' - all but one killed when the roof fell in (trs. de Selincourt, 332). See, too, Murray (1978, rep. 1993), 203, for the anecdote from Pausanias about Kleomedes killing sixty children in a school while insane.

3 See Murray (1978, rep. 1993) 202-6.

4 Peter Wilson's chapter, 'Leading the Tragic Khoros' in Pelling (1997), provides an examination of the khoregia as being a 'kind of paradramatic performance' (85) - which puts one in mind of modern award ceremonies and their rituals.

5 See Sommerstein's (1973) translation:

> For at seven years or less
> I became a girl priestess
> In the Erechthean temple of the Maid;
> And at ten upon this hill
> I made flour in the mill
> For the cakes which to our Lady are displayed,
>
> Then I went to Brauron town
> And put on a yellow gown
> To walk in the procession as the Bear;
> To complete my perfect score
> I the sacred basket bore
> At Athena's feast when I was young and fair.

6 See Pomeroy (1975, rep. 1994), 75-6; Blundell (1995), 131-5; Versnel (in McAuslan & Walcot, 1996), 198-201, and Guettel Cole in Blundell & Williamson (1998).

7 Guettel Cole, ibid., 40. The assassination of Hipparchos by Aristogeiton and Harmodios in 514 at the Panathenaic procession was a result of political conspiracy, but the flashpoint may have been the public humiliation offered to Harmodius by rejection of his sister as unsuitable to take part as a basket-bearer in the presentation ceremony. (Thucydides, *History of the Peloponnesian War*, 6. 56. trs. Warner, (1954), 445.)

8 As Just points out (1989, Chap. 2), though Athenian women could not be citizens, their husband's citizen status entitled them to a certain recognition in public or religious events - for example, concubines, female slaves and wives of metics were excluded from the Thesmophoria. On the disputed question of whether women were or were not included in the audiences of the dramatic festivals, see Goldhill in Easterling (1997), 64-6.

9 See Pickard-Cambridge (1988), Chapter 2.16, and especially, 76-7.

10 Winkler, in Winkler & Zeitlin (1990), 20-62.

11 Wiles (1997, 87-113), attempts to correct what he sees as Taplin's (1978) playing down of the importance of the chorus, and, while avoiding hypotheses about mimetic choreography, makes a convincing case for the dance movements of strophe and antistrophe being the same.

12 See Goldhill in Winkler & Zeitlin (1990), 105-6, and Goldhill in Easterling (1997), 59.

13 See Muir in Easterling & Muir (1985), 198-202.

14 Muir, ibid., 216.

15 *The Republic*, III, 397, trs. & rev. Lee (1987), 97.

16 *Drama from 5 to 16: Curriculum Matters 17, HMI Series* (1989).

17 Slade (1954 & 1964), Way (1967), and Heathcote (1976).

18 See Beauman (1982), 272-8 on the RSC and the Theatre of Cruelty season; Linklater (1981) on the work at The Royal Court from 1955-80; and Sandford (1995 reissue of 1965 dedicated *The Drama Review*) on happenings and other experimental performance work.

19 In 1976, McGregor (1976, 9-19) had outlined some concepts and activities relating to the use of drama in education as the situation then stood. She mentioned, *inter alia*, child-centred drama, non-performance drama, and the use of play. By the next year, when she collaborated on the Schools Council Drama Teaching Project (10-16) Report (McGregor, Tate & Robinson, 1977), the assessment of drama, how it could be organised in schools, and how teachers should be trained to teach drama were raised as issues needing urgent attention (1977, 206 -16). In that space of time, emphasis had moved from the use of drama as a developmental experience for children, to asking how drama as a classroom subject might be used as a regulatory discipline.

20 For example, the HMI Series booklet cited at n.16, and *The Teaching and Learning of Drama*, HMI Inspection Review, 1990.

21 For an account of the development of TIE see Redlington (1983).

22 *The Guardian*, Wednesday March 20 1996, 'Give the Kids A Break'.

23 On drama as a socially 'healing' force, see Amies, Warren & Watling (1986).

24 Steiner (1984).

25 Taylor (1978, reprinted 1985, 1986, 1988). The author clearly expects that teachers may want to produce Greek plays in translation with pupils, and in the further reading list, signals editions particularly suitable for performance, even, for performance with younger children.

26 See Brown's discussion on the assignation of lines 572-6 (1987), 169. Unless otherwise stated, all quotations are from Brown (1987).

27 See Blundell (1989, rep. 1991), 106-48, and specially 110.

28 Goldhill (1986), 88. The specific case he chooses as an example of a reading affected by context is the Anouilh version of 1944.

29 Film footage of the disposal of corpses of Auschwitz victims, or of the disinterment of mass graves is only rendered bearable to watch because it is understood that these remains are finally about to be treated with reverence as dead human beings.

30 Griffin, 'Antigone: Right or Wrong?'; reproduced in *Dionysus I-III Omnibus Edition*, 1996.

31 Dickinson (1969), 261.

32 Richtarik (1994), 216-228. In an amateur production of *The Riot Act* [OUdb276] given during the Stratford-upon-Avon Festival in 1997, Creon was cast to a good-looking young actor, which may have been in an attempt to avoid the 'Ulster demagogue' stereotyping. However, the

young female Chorus had been given *Riverdance* style choreography, which introduced a feel of pastiche rather than of Irish ethnicity.

33 George Orwell's *1984* predicted the subordination of the individual to the police state; it was filmed in 1955. In 1984, Orwell's prophecy of dystopia was again made into a film, but there was no stage play of the novel, only of *Animal Farm,* which was performed at the Cottesloe in the same season as *Antigone.*

34 *P&P,* July 1984.

35 See 'The Present in the Past', TV03, Open University course, *A209: Fifth Century Athens: Democracy & City State* (1995), pres. John Purkis. Also, the article on 'whistle-blowers' by Roger Dobson in *The Independent*, 9 June 1998, which includes Sarah Tisdall in a list of 'Great Whistleblowers of Our Time'.

36 Timothy Ramsden, *P&P,* March 1994.

37 Quite apart from Shakespeare cycles (*The Wars of the Roses,* 1963, *The Romans*, 1972), there was John Barton's ten-play cycle, *The Greeks*, of 1980.

38 *RSC Magazine:Spring 1992*, 'It's All Greek?', 18-19. The RSC archives at the Shakespeare Centre Library have the usual publicity photos and prompt copies, as well as the in-house video of a performance.

39 Wendy Greenhill in telephone interview, 25 November 1993. She had hoped to get the six texts published in an edition which would include introductory essays by the playwrights, but had not to date been successful.

40 Betty Caplan, *P&P*, January 1993; 'RSC Antigones Festival', 82-3.

41 Easterling in Pelling (1997, 26-8) reviews the points of interest, noting the impreciseness of Creon's decree with regard to the possibility of 'throwing out' Polyneices' body to avoid pollution. (In contrast, see Creon's stipulation that Antigone be provided with food and drink in her tomb, so as 'to avoid pollution of the whole city' (776)). 'The debate', Easterling points out, 'is not allowed to turn on points of legality ... still less does [the play] dramatize any straightforward conflict ... although it has often been read as if it did'. (28)

42 See Guettel Cole in Blundell & Williamson (1998, 33), and, on the move from Artemis to Demeter, Versnel, in McAuslan & Walcot (1996, 200).

43 See Holst-Warhaft (1992), Chapter 5, and also 162-3 on *Antigone.*

44 *The Glasgow Evening Times* on 14 September 1992 gives a good example of the congratulatory but patronising coverage given to the participants: 'It's the theatrical equivalent of playing keepie-uppie with Maradona, helping Stephen King pen his next bestseller, or plotting battle manoeuvres with Storming Norman. Imagine performing a play at the international Mecca of Stratford-upon-Avon under the auspices of the RSC. That is the dream which will come true next month when [the Scottish Youth Theatre] head south for the culmination of one of their most ambitious and exciting projects to date.' The *Solihull News* of 20 November 1992 reported the Solihull Schools Council Inspector as lauding the Solihull combined schools group's participation as: 'an indication of the quality of drama teaching in Solihull schools and the pool of young talent developed by it', thus shifting much credit for the enterprise to adults.

CHAPTER 6

WOMEN'S VOICES, WOMEN'S HANDS

This chapter starts with two related ideas: first, the proposition that female lamentation ('Women's Voices') poses, in various ways, implicit threats to male authority; and secondly, that one of those threats is the possibility of female lamentation leading to protest. Just as the voices of women are rendered by male writers and actors in Greek tragedy, so too are the recognisably female actions and sanctioned roles. 'Women's' hands perform the gestures of greeting, farewell, lament, or pleading, and it is clear that there are certain actions or deeds, registered by in-text reference, by which a female character might be typified.[1] The play which particularly brings together these two areas is *Women of Troy.* In this play, as in some others less often performed this century, the voice of female protest against war as organised and licit male violence, appears to be given a hearing. In this chapter, a section on 'anti-war plays' is followed by a résumé of attitudes to *Women of Troy* in English theatre this century. Case studies are then given of two recent English productions of what might be deemed 'anti-war' plays: *Women of Troy* by the RNT [OUdb221], and *The Phoenician Women* by the RSC [OUdb211].

Recently, plays which, because of their 'classic' status and a certain distancing lent by poetic form, might have seemed to channel and defuse the anger and protest arising from reactions to war, have in fact been rendered less 'safe' and more challenging to the political (as well as the theatrical) Establishment by more experimental production approaches. One of the notable developments in English theatre from the late seventies has been the rise in the number of female theatre practitioners - directors, designers, composers - interested in working with ancient Greek texts in order to bring to bear on them ideas which are assumed to have been generated by feminist thinking, but which seem to some modern interpreters to have been

adumbrated by, especially, the plays of Euripides. (This interest has resulted in the production of previously less-performed plays such as the *Ion* and *The Phoenician Women* of Euripides, and the *Electra* of Sophocles.) In this chapter, the analysis of the staging of two plays of 'female protest', *Women of Troy* and *The Phoenician Women*, under the direction of women's hands, leads a wider investigation of the significance of female assumption of 'male roles' in theatre, both with regard to the functions of modern English theatre and to the effect such female usurpation has on the reading, through performance, of canonical texts.

Voices of protest: ancient and modern

In her comparative study of ancient and modern Greek examples of female lamentation, Holst-Warhaft enumerates the threats implied to a male-run society by the power of women's funeral lamentation. Firstly, it can incite individual reciprocal violence, urging personal vendettas when the wider community needs to keep retributive activity in its own hands. Secondly - and this is true of instances where the deceased has died fighting for the community - it stresses the importance of the individual, and through strong personal emotions of loss and anger, implicitly reproaches the state for causing the loved one's death. Thirdly, allowing women to dominate the funeral rites gives them a potentially dangerous power:

> In a patriarchal society where women are consistently undervalued, it leaves in the hands of women, who, both as childbearers and midwives already have a certain control over birth, potential authority over the rites of death...[2]

Holst-Warhaft compares the 'woman's voice' of female lament-singers of the Inner Mani region with the dramatic constructs (or re-constructs) by, first, Homer, and then the Athenian dramatists who put speeches or songs of grief and accusation into the mouths of their female characters. She acknowledges that the Mani laments are not typical of the rest of Greece, and that the region is notorious for its blood-feuds, so there is a tantalising suggestion that the *moirologhia* of Mani may be close to the kind of women's expression of grief which seemed, in the Classical period, to pose a threat to the order of the state by stressing the importance of the

individual. There are features of Mani *moirologhia* which are clearly subversive of civic or social order: incitement to revenge; pain of loss transmuted to anger against the supposed killer; family loyalty presented as more important than loyalty to the whole community, so that, as for Antigone, brother becomes more important than husband. In addition to these characteristics, Holst-Warhaft suggests that the very production of such laments can in itself be seen as implicitly subversive since they are artistic works highly regarded by the whole community, but made and performed by women. Although they may have, for the mourners, a therapeutic function, their creation and reception can be assumed to be in some sense pleasurable, especially when the dramatic or poetic achievement is recognised by all. The pain of the bereaved, the loss of status sustained, the need to take an active role in retribution (where appropriate) - all these put emphasis on the singer and give her importance, but if the lament is considered as a work of art or craft in itself, she gains additional kudos.

A wail of grief may turn into a wail of protest, and in this respect it is clearly something which must be held in check whenever a protest might be directed (however misguidedly) against the state authority. In the funeral of one private individual, there was little danger that the clamour of female mourning would constitute a threat to the greater community; Solon's sixth-century funeral legislation had indeed restricted female attendance at the *prothesis* and *ekphora*, but in order to curb ostentation and rivalry between aristocratic or wealthy families, not because of any perceived threat from vocal women.[3] However, when the first dead of the Peloponnesian War were given state burial, the presence of many bereaved war widows, mothers and female relatives of the dead at the exceptionally extended *prothesis* and in the public cemetery might have exacerbated resentment on the part of Pericles' critics; hence, perhaps, his final words to the women in his audience (as Thucydides delivers them in *The History of the Peloponnesian War*, 2.46).[4] Women - whether mothers or widows - were exhorted to put aside personal considerations and act as ideal types, buckling down to the task of producing more children to replace those who had died, and thus increasing their individual stakes in the future of the city. It is unlikely that Pericles was seriously concerned that a mass-protest against the war might be mounted by the bereaved women of Athens, but their presence at the ceremony had to be

acknowledged, and their potential for causing division or inciting protest - either vocally or through their very mute witness - must be neutralised. The *Epitaphios logos* put the power to praise the dead into the mouth of one chosen man, so the individual could be subsumed in the city, and the good deeds of the single soldier or citizen, depersonalised, could be added to a kind of treasury of merits. Effectively, this took the voice of personal and individual mourning away from man and woman alike, and though Pericles deprecates the use of the *epitaphios* (2.35), it served his needs well on this occasion.

As with all manifestations of female power which seemed to threaten or unsettle the ancient Greek male world, channels were found to divert and so neutralise the threat. There were attributes which men identified as endemic to a woman's nature and some which also gave her some kind of power: her tendency to 'wildness'; her appetite for sex, wine and food; her ability to give birth; her propensity to ensnare and weaken a man through sexual attraction; her culturally acquired but nonetheless often wondrous domestic skill; and her disturbing capacity for feeling and expressing extreme emotions. Such attributes were, to an extent, directed and depersonalised by the major women's festivals and by women's participation in the religious rituals of life. The rituals of death allowed excesses of mourning to be acted out in a way which both stressed and channelled female over-emotionalism, so 'women's behaviour at funerals helped to strengthen the dominant ideology concerning female gender and thus the construction of femininity was maintained'.[5] What was silently written out of such rites was personal anger and resentment against the cause of death of a real individual. Such feelings could, however, be expressed by way of fictional or mythological female characters in the plays of the tragedians.[6]

Characters in the theatre are by definition non-real and larger than life, so it is not surprising that their emotions are large scale and that they may be commended or admired for saying or doing in the action of a play what real people would be condemned for in real life. In the case of women whose grief leads them to protest, that excessiveness (as Thucydides' Pericles would have termed it) is one of their characteristics. Clytemnestra, Antigone, Sophocles' Electra, Hecuba (in *Hecuba*) are what they are because transformed by grief; no longer 'real women' but women

made unwomanly by loss, pain and anger. That concept of the 'unwomanly woman' provides the link between the protests against male authority or violence - either military or political - voiced by female characters of fifth-century drama, and the readings given the plays in which they appear by women of theatre at the latter end of the twentieth century. The women in Greek tragedy who become unwomanly (that is, not how a 'good woman' should be) because of their grief, anger or pain are nonetheless allowed a voice. Neither wholly right nor wholly wrong, they express the experience of an individual, even though that individual may also have been, to original audiences as to modern ones, iconic. Whereas early feminists of this century might have felt they must reject an Athenian dramatist's construct of the 'woman's voice' on the grounds that it was just that - a male construct - later feminist reception of plays like *Women of Troy* or *Ion* can register the fifth-century male playwright's recognition of an authentic female response or experience.[7]

'Anti-war plays'

> the notion that women will not, by virtue of their nature, acquiesce with the state in its demand for men to die in its defence is one that has been the subject of much debate among feminists.[8]

As is clear from the continuing success of Aristophanes' *Lysistrata*, it is not just feminists who have debated this notion. Aristophanes uses, for the delight of his (predominantly or wholly) male audience, the comic premise that women might actually be able to subdue, in the short term, one aspect of their natures (their appetite for sex) in order to end a war which takes their men away from them, so that in the long term their appetites can be more regularly and fully satisfied. Through the ribaldry, *double entendres* and quasi-fairy-tale burlesque of the comedy comes the message that the *polis* is only to be kept whole and healthy by a peaceful, settled relationship between men and women; that a continuing state of war polarises a community into those who fight and those who are fought for, so that the women become just so much potential booty. Nor, Aristophanes suggests, is it just the men and women of Athens who suffer from this female diminution in role; the bold stroke allowable only in the context of comic disruption of norms is to make Athenian *and* Spartan (as well as Corinthian and Boeotian) women unite in

their resolve to restore wholeness to their lives by achieving peace at the cost of temporary abstinence. Female wiles and female attributes are to be used to effect a state of peace in which women can once again enjoy the power proper to their gender roles.

Aristophanes was writing this fantasy scenario ('what if women got together and...?') in 411, two years after the terrible and chastening defeat of the expedition to Sicily. Four years earlier, Euripides had written *Women of Troy* as part of a thematically linked trilogy which focused on events before and after the Trojan war. There is some doubt as to whether he could have completed the play as a specific comment on the Melian massacre of the winter of 416 in time for its second-prize-winning performance at the Great Dionysia in 415, but the fate of the Melian women as victims of war would inevitably have been received by the audience as analogous to that of the *Troades.*[9]

If the situation represented in the play was a tragedy for the victims (Trojans/Melians), it was also a sad state of affairs for Athenians to consider when they saw themselves equated with the rapacious, gullible, devious and nervy Greek forces at Troy. However, while it is quite clear that, though non-Greek, the Trojans, and specifically the Trojan women, are occupying the moral high ground in this play, Euripides builds into each of the lead women's personalities character traits which distinguish them and redeem them from Morality play simplicity. Andromache may be the type of the perfect wife, but she is also very much aware of her value and virtues; she is, perhaps, over-proud of having run a tight ship in her domestic sphere. Hecuba mourns for her city, her husband, her children, but most of all, for herself. She berates Helen for seducing her handsome son, and remembers Astyanax's baby promises to clip his hair for her funeral pyre. She has lost her roles as wife and queen and sees her role as mother gradually disappearing during the course of the play: what is left but to be a mourner?

Thus, Euripides represents the ability to give voice in lamentation as being all that is left to the woman who has had all possessions and all defining roles stripped away. He shows, in the prologue and the four main episodes, the fate of various types of women: of Polyxena, the virgin

sacrifice; of the god-touched virgin-seer, Cassandra, who, having been raped by Ajax the lesser, is to be witness and victim in the murder of Agamemnon; of the good wife, Andromache, who foresees a death-in-life in the bed of Neoptolemus; of the marvellous whore, Helen; and finally, of the type of all mothers, Hecuba - to whom is given, rather than to the absent Andromache, the lament over the small body of Astyanax. When all else is denied the Woman, she can still use her voice in lament and in reproach against the gods or against her fate.

The message of the play to men, specifically to the Athenians in 415, was, perhaps, to be moderate and god-fearing, even in aggression. The play's prologue dialogue between Athene and Poseidon makes clear the reason for the (as yet unknown) misfortunes which will dog the returning Greeks: Athene is angered by the unpunished impiety of Cassandra's being raped and hauled from sanctuary in her temple, and Poseidon's opening speech mentions the desecration of sacred groves and temples, of Priam cut down at the steps of Zeus's altar. Even in the heat of battle, even at the heart of a sacked city, the gods require respect. Translated from the context of myth, when the gods walked on earth with men, this message becomes an assertion of the need to observe rules of combat, to use humanity - whether it be friend, foe or, like the Melians, wavering neutral - humanely. As the play progresses, however, the women of Troy are permitted more and more to express disillusionment with the gods, and the very fact that they will continue to live, though enslaved, exiled and abused, becomes a source of admiration; the combined grief and endurance of the women is what we might in modern parlance term 'heroic'. Conacher[10] singles out Hecuba as the expression of this nobility of suffering, but as will become apparent, modern directors have extended this ennoblement to include the chorus, such that it becomes a 'heroic' sorority of endurance.

***Women of Troy* in performance**

For audiences in this century, Euripides' perceived messages held good. Like Wilfred Owen's war poetry, this play seemed to be about 'War and the pity of War. The Poetry is in the pity'. During and after the First World War, the poetry of the laments of the Women of Troy, both

individualised and choric, were rediscovered by a generation of scholar-thespians.[11] The play provided an acceptable (because 'Classical') expression of protest against war, and also a star role for a mature actress. Lillah McCarthy played Hecuba in Harley Granville-Barker's 1915 production which became 'the first professional production of a Greek play in America to be critically acclaimed', and in the same year, Murray's translation of the play had also been performed by the Chicago Little Theatre in a tour sponsored by the Women's Peace party.[12] Lewis Casson had directed the play for Manchester's Gaiety Theatre, and staged it again in 1919 in Oxford at the time of the Versailles Conference, with another performance in 1920 to mark the foundation of the League of Nations Union. In Casson's production, his wife, Sybil Thorndike (then only thirty-seven) played Hecuba, with her son Christopher as Astyanax. Though both Thorndike and Casson felt she was not an obvious choice for Hecuba ('Mine's really a vicar's wife's face', she said), critics applauded her playing of the role.[13] She was thought to have expressed, not just an individual's but a nation's suffering; Hecuba may, after all, be seen as the personification of Troy, brought down, by the end of the play, to the earth in ruins. Her input to the production of this play at this time, in this translation, was informed by personal experience and conviction; her fears for Casson during the war, the deaths of her youngest brother Frank in 1917 and of her father shortly afterwards, and her own strongly felt pacifism. In spite of her own and her husband's reservations, then, this was clearly a role which Thorndike felt she needed to play, just as the play itself was one which theatre practitioners felt needed to be seen by audiences ravaged by the horrors and losses of the First World War.

That a play so sharply critical of the victors and sympathetic to the vanquished could continue to be presented for audiences still engaged in or newly emerged as conquerors from conflict may seem surprising, but such has been the history of *Women of Troy* in the latter part of this century. Assuming its being a dramatic commentary on the Melian affair, Paul Cartledge compares Euripides' daring in writing this play to 'a British playwright of known radical political persuasion composing a tragedy in response to the bombing of Baghdad during the Gulf War of 1991 and equating it by implication with the Nazi German air-raids on London during the Second World War'.[14] Burian records Sartre's adaptation of the play in 1964, in response to the

French war in Algeria, and Michael Cacoyannis's (1971) striking film version (following on an enormously successful stage run of over 650 performances in New York) during the Vietnam War.[15] The Suzuki production (titled *The Trojan Women*) in Tokyo in 1974, reprised in 1985/6 in the United States and on tour, made similar use of shock assignment of roles. The setting was the close of Second World War, the Trojan women were Japanese, and the Greeks were represented as U.S. troops. Andromache was raped on stage, and, also onstage, 'Astyanax' was killed with a sword.[16] Like Peter Sellars' [OUdb208] 1993 'Gulf War' version of *The Persians*, Suzuki's account of the play was intended to shock the audience by setting a contemporary political context for the original.[17]

During the eighties in Britain, the military engagement in the Falklands War in 1982 might have seemed occasion for a British/Argentinian version, but, despite the notorious triumphalism of Mrs. Thatcher's 'Rejoice! Rejoice!' and the *Sun's* 'Gotcha!' headline at the sinking of the *Belgrano*, no equivalence was noted in productions of the play between the victorious Greeks and the British troops, almost embarrassed by the youth and vulnerability of their vanquished Argentinian captives. This was probably not so much because directors feared seeming antipatriotic as because the Argentinian forces on the Falklands could not be seen as equivalent to the women of Troy. Nor, clearly, was it appropriate to cast the Falklanders as Trojans and the temporary occupation of the islands by Argentinian forces as a Greek conquest and destruction of Troy. But *Women of Troy* continued to attract the attention of directors for reasons more connected to the ongoing influence of 1970s feminism than to the play's 'relevance' to contemporary politico-military situations.

***Women of Troy* in women's hands**

One very good reason for amateur and student companies to choose to produce the play is that it offers parts for women: one leading role, three very interesting and playable ones, and chorus work for twelve or more women. This is no frivolous observation; Peter Hall records in his Diaries going in March 1979 to see the Cambridge undergraduate production, in which his

daughter, Jenny, had gained excellent reviews, and remarks, with the satisfaction of a proud father who is also an eminent director, that she was showing considerable promise.[18] In 1980, the play was the choice for the King's College, London, Greek language production, and since Bradfield College became co-educational, it has been performed there using girl students. The version written by Brendan Kennelly for the Peacock Theatre, Dublin, in 1993 was premiered in Britain in the Spring of 1997 [OUdb865] by the Sheffield University Drama society. If young women actors want experience of working with an ancient Greek tragedy, this is the one which (apart from Aeschylus's *Suppliants* with full chorus of fifty Daughters of Danaos, plus their maids) offers most scope for the largest number. It also demands inventive chorus work and imaginative investigation of the complexities of the female characters, in order that the play should not deteriorate into a monotonous or bathetic drone of misery. It is a play which it is easy to do badly, but done well, can provide a showcase for actors and directors.

The second modern consideration which makes the play particularly attractive to *female* theatre practitioners is that it can be seen as expressing the outcome of a sex war. By the end of the play, all that is left of Troy is its women; a subjugated race. Apart from Helen, the Spartan, all the Greeks who appear on stage are men, and soldiers. Early feminist readers of the play did not need to relocate Troy to Japan, or Northern Ireland, or Iraq; the sack of Troy and the fate of its women could be interpreted as a metaphor for the subjugation, colonisation and exploitation of women by men wherever and whenever it had occurred. It was, however, a male playwright, Edward Bond, who, in his 1978 play [OUdb226] *The Woman* (actually written between 1974-7), turned his accustomed socialist spotlight on the sexual politics implied by the account of the sack of Troy in Euripides' play. *The Woman* starts before the fall of Troy and shows Hecuba's attempts to buy off the Greeks through diplomatic liaison with Ismene, the wife of the Greek general, Heros. The first half of the play records the women's failure to achieve a peace, and the Greek brutality, not only against the Trojans but also against one of their own: Ismene. The second act finds Hecuba and Ismene in exile on an island where they are sought out by Heros, still in search of the lost statue of the goddess of fortune, Bond's equivalent of Helen. An alliance between Hecuba, Ismene and an escapee mine worker brings about the ultimate defeat of

Heros and his male elitist materialism. Bond describes Hecuba as representing 'history ... she is able to understand what's going on ... Hecuba stands for the rational, and the combination of the rational and the proletariat triumphs'.[19] In terms of Hecuba's characterisation, *The Woman* owes more to *Hecuba* than to *Women of Troy*, since Bond's character is forceful, active in her revenge, and finds ways to use others to help further her aims. Bond himself directed the first production at the National Theatre in 1978, with Yvonne Bryceland, a South African actress known for her commitment to theatre as an instrument of social change, as Hecuba.

Zoe T. Cormack remarked in her review of the Royal National Theatre's 1995 [OUdb221] production of *Women of Troy* that the play has had 'a special place in the history of highbrow outrage at the horrors of war' and 'has been co-opted in support of almost every pacifist cause this century'.[20] The third aspect of the play which acquired a resonance for women in the early eighties was not just that it was anti-war, but that it could be seen as a protest against the fact of (male) militarism and military preparations. Though, as has been indicated, there was in the seventies and eighties no immediate war situation which might equate Britain either with Greeks or Trojans, increased deployment of nuclear weapons in Europe, and specifically, the siting of American nuclear weapons at Greenham Common in Berkshire, resulted in the creation of a feminist offshoot of the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament: the Women's Peace Group. What the Greenham Women and their supporters throughout the country were protesting against was the government's readiness to house, and so, implicitly approve the use of, weapons of wholesale destruction. In order that there might not be 'Trojan Women' camping out in the ruins of their world, the Greenham protesters voluntarily exiled themselves from the normalities of their various lives to stage a physical enactment of life at the edge of existence. The ironies of the situation - that the community of women so formed was rich in many ways, producing its own culture; that the fence protecting the military was also a prison wall; that the threat of women acting peacefully but out of an acceptably passive role aggravated the military to brutish responses - were not lost on the women or those who observed them. The drama that came out of the Greenham Women's movement was not, perhaps, great theatre,[21] and even Tony Harrison, who attempted in 1988 to use Greek texts in the context of the Greenham protest, was

dissatisfied with his results. Harrison's *The Common Chorus* [OUdb127] was a three part work which used some of *Lysistrata* and *Women of Troy*, but it was never performed in full.[22] What happened at the fence was more dramatic, more full of theatre, than didactic or emotive rehearsals of it could be, and just as the photograph image of a 'chorus' of women dancing on top of a nuclear silo had been a potent symbol for Harrison in his attempt to write *The Common Chorus*, so the image of women camped out on one side of a wire fence with male military on the other side was a potent image which was to inform later productions of *Women of Troy*.

The 1995 Royal National Theatre production

The programme for the 1995 RNT Olivier Theatre production of *Women of Troy* (which used the Kenneth McLeish translation) included, with the usual selection of material about Euripides, the Melian Affair and the Trojan Wars, extracts from Harrison's *The Common Chorus*, from *Zlata's Diary: A Child's Life in Sarajevo* (1993), and an Edward Bond poem of 1995. The emphasis was clearly being put on the repeated universals of vulnerable female victims' experience of war: loss of menfolk, loss of homes and possessions, rape, enslavement, degradation to subhuman status, death. The continuing modern recurrence of ancient experiences was conveyed in the production's set and costume design by Iona McLeish. The many-levelled set rose to large mesh gates at the rear of the stage, with an elevated guardroom at centre stage right. At the start of the play, smoke rose from ventilation grills in the floor; shallow puddles each side of the main entrance and a rusty oil drum with practicable tap suggested a meagre source of drinking water. Dilapidated crash barriers and concrete slabs, together with a 'bull-run' central entrance, suggested a football stadium serving as detention centre for internees or prisoners awaiting interrogation or sentence. It also suggested the security fences of military bases.

Annie Castledine collaborated with Annabel Arden, a founder of Théâtre de Complicité, in the direction of the play, and the cast they assembled was deliberately heterogeneous in terms of previous experience and ethnic mix. Rosemary Harris (Hecuba) was an experienced classical actor, as was Peter McEnery (Menelaus), but Jane Birkin (Andromache) was famous as a sixties

film and recording artist, and Janie Dee (Helen) as a performer in musicals rather than in classical theatre. The twelve-women chorus included actors from Iran, Japan, Turkey and Sarajevo; Josette Bushell-Mingo (Cassandra) had worked for Black Mime Theatre and Temba, as well as many other ethnically mixed companies. The Greeks were played as Americans.

A preview interview with Annie Castledine in *The Independent* (Wednesday 15 March) signalled that her interest in the play was personal rather than scholarly. Castledine spoke of her obsession, from youth, with The Greeks: 'I've known the Greek plays and myths since I was five ... As a child, Hector peopled - personed - my room. He's been there and I've spoken to him'.[23] To try to help her cast make connections between the world of the play and contemporary warfare, she showed them 'footage of forced movements of people, the diaspora, the situations in the Balkan states, the Kurds, Iraq, Iran'.[24] In the same interview, Castledine said she and her team were anxious to avoid 'splurging generalised emotionality', but for one reviewer at least, this was exactly what resulted: Zoe Cormack described the performance as 'a well-meaning but monolithic rant on human suffering, a lamentation rather than (as Euripides tries to offer) an analysis'.[25]

In parenthesis: voices of grief and anger - but what else?

It might be useful at this point to consider, before commenting on the choices made in the RNT production, what - other than 'a monolithic rant on human suffering' - Euripides *was* offering.

It seems plausible that this play came as the third in a sequence which set up a series of questions about the relationship of gods and men.[26] Its narrative is meagre and substantive action limited to the disposal of the Trojan slaves, the recovery of Helen and the death of Astyanax. Prefaced as it is by the dialogue between Poseidon and Athena deciding the fate of the returning and triumphant Greeks, it seems to suggest that as the women of Troy are helpless and enslaved in the power of their Greek conquerors, so are the Greek men helpless and pawns, if not slaves, in the hands of the gods. Certainly, the burden of the women's laments is that war is

an appalling thing for the vanquished, who suffer in a variety of ways, but the play also carries a powerful and subversive message of accusation of the gods. The first strophe and antistrophe of the stasimon at 1060-80 give the Chorus's reproach to Zeus for his desertion of Troy, inspite of past Trojan service and devotions in his temple. The second half of the stasimon focuses on the individual Trojan woman's suffering, touching on the fate of husband, wife and children in the family, and then, in the second antistrophe, on the Greek enemy, personified in Menelaus and Helen. Women's mouths voice the reproach of Zeus and the lament which turns to a vengeful call for reciprocal suffering, for this, after all, is all women can do. But this stasimon does not register the depth of the Women of Troy's despair; Astynax's death personalises and epitomises the death of hope, and Hecuba, as senior and chief family mourner, makes the lament for that death.

Embedded in the final movement of the play, after the lament for Astyanax and before the re-entry of Talthybius with his order to fire Troy, is a moment of self-referentiality: at 1240-5, Hecuba asserts that the gods had always intended to destroy Troy, so Trojan diligence in worship and ritual observation was pointless. But she then says that, had they not been so cast low, had the gods *not* turned the world upside down (1243), they would not have won the fame they will now be given by poets of the future. In spite of the insistence in the parodic passage from 1287 ff. that Troy is destroyed by the will of the gods, and that all that remains is its dead, now under the ground on which the women fall and beat their fists, Hecuba's prophecy stays in the mind. The Women of Troy will win lasting fame, not for what they have done but for what has been done to them: their endurance and the story of how they responded in their individual ways to suffering will render them (in a modern sense) 'heroic'.

It is clear, then, that there are a number of issues concealed under the main situation. It is too simplistic to say that is an anti-war play - though it certainly foregrounds the plight of the vanquished and disempowered. It is also too simplistic to see it, anachronistically, as being about male domination of the female since what is significant is that Euripides seems to be pointing a parallel between the Trojan Women and the conquering Greeks. The Greek men who

appear on stage are as complex as the Trojan female characters: Talthybius, an essentially decent soldier-diplomat, trying to balance innate humaneness and the demands of military success; Menelaus, cuckold and victorious general, still capable of being seduced by his errant wife. And, because modern Western society has problems with taking the gods of ancient Greece seriously, it is difficult to convey in a performance of this play what being deserted by them might mean to the Women, and what being intrigued against by them will mean to the homeward-bound Greeks.

The RNT production: an analysis

What it *is* possible to bring out in modern theatre is the individualisation of the female characters - even to the extent of individualising the Chorus, in contravention of authenticity. Productions which aim either for 'realistic' or for cross-culturally referential representations of characters do so in order to provide for the audience resonances for their time, just as iconic representations would have had resonances for Euripides' audience. In the RNT production, Castledine used both realism and cross-cultural references. In the representation of Helen, for example, what might be described as a 'paraiconic' reference was made to the vulnerability of a modern icon of desire, Marilyn Monroe.[27] Before her entry cue, Helen could be seen teetering down the spiral metal staircase upstage, from the guardroom, in a white dress of the style made famous by Monroe in the 1955 film, *The Seven Year Itch*. In addition to the visual cues - the blond wig, the white chiffon dress, the high heeled sandals - the decision to play the Spartans, Menelaus and Helen, as Southern States American (whereas Talthybius had a Northern American accent) allowed Janie Dee to deliver Helen's lines with a breathy Monroe lilt. By this date, Monroe's association with the Kennedy brothers was well known and biographers in print and film had hypothesised about the circumstances of her apparent suicide. Although Euripides' words for both chorus and Trojan women characters condemn Helen utterly, and Hecuba's response in their *agon* systematically deals with the points in the Spartan's sophistic self-defence, this production used the semiotics of paraiconic reference to argue that an object of male desire may remain an innocent pawn, even if she is guilty of sexual misdemeanours.[28] In the hands of

directors sensitised to feminist arguments, a visual message instantly accessible to a modern audience reinforced Helen's self-defence. Like Monroe, the message of costuming seemed to suggest, Helen had been exploited, not so much by Aphrodite the goddess as by Aphrodite-in-the-minds-of-men, and so might deserve some sisterly sympathy from a modern audience.

In representing Cassandra, too, the directors had used the semiotics of dress. Josette Bushell-Mingo was clearly differentiated from the other named women characters by her skin colour,[29] and the consequent contrast of black body and white 'wedding dress' was striking. Her hair was cut close to her scalp, and though this is an accustomed style for this actress, in contrast with the other women's hairstyles - long hair or headwraps suggestive of long hair - the effect was to imply a head cropped either in mourning, in dedication (as for a nun), or to recall the punishment for wartime collaborateurs. Over the soiled and tattered white dress, she wore a military greatcoat, and on her feet, cumbersome army boots which deliberately rendered her rapid movement during the 'wedding hymn' entrance awkward. The actress was able to use the weight of the coat and boots to make her movement jerky, apparently uncontrolled - as if enslavement to the Greeks was to be a new kind of straightjacket against which she must fight. This representation was designed to correct any preconceptions of Cassandra as an Ophelia-like wraith, daintily mad in white satin. Cassandra was shown as a misfit, an outsider because of her god-given powers and an embarrassment to her family and friends, since in her madness she could do or say almost anything. Her appearance, combining the mockery of a wedding dress with the brutal clumsiness of army boots and coat, gave particular reason for Hecuba's grieved and shamed reaction at 343-52. The potential beauty of Cassandra, the young woman, was compromised and distorted by the actress's representation of her appearance, and the disorder of Cassandra's mind suggested by the disorder of the actress's movement.

In terms of performance style, the directors had been eclectic; although they were not attempting authenticity there were, as has been outlined, suggestions of iconic representation and of non-realism. With regard to the playing of the Chorus, although the directors had decided against using masks, the women used their scarves as veils to hide their faces from Greeks, or, with

formalised movement, to express self-absorption in misery. Their tattered dresses were roughly dyed in dark blues, purples, maroons and rusts, and they used their discoloured military style coats to drape the body of Astyanax on Hector's shield. Thus, the chorus costumes suggested the women's lost wealth and security and the heaping up of greatcoats on Astyanax's body indicated the relinquishing of any remaining hope of rescue or protection from the dead Trojan men.

Eclecticism in performance style was used to good effect for the Chorus lyrics which were broken up between solo and unison voices. The diversity of languages in the cast was used in the fourth stasimon to suggest what a programme note called Troy's role as a 'melting-pot of nations' - but at this point, also, a falling tower of Babel. But, whereas at the fall of Babel diversity of tongues signified division among mankind, it was clearly the directors' intention that at this point the diversity of chorus tongues should indicate a unity in suffering; misery and despair are comprehensible in any language.[30] The final stasimon, with its address to Zeus and farewell to Troy, was given a 'Blues' setting and sung as a duet which, because of the implicit reference to black slave songs, underlined the fact that the women were indeed now slaves.

The emotive appeal of the performance was very great and visually and aurally expressed the 'pity of war', but the overall effect was that complexities of the play had been missed in a determination to show its 'modern relevance' as a women's cry of lament in time of war. Two points may help to show how the directors had, in the view of this member of the audience at least, failed Euripides: the first concerns 'realism', the second, the Gods. In casting the production, Castledine was on very firm ground in choosing Rosemary Harris, a mature actress with considerable experience in classical theatre, as Hecuba. 'I ... wanted a performer who could be at home with the concept of being a queen ... *there are certain things you want to be acted qualities and certain things you want to be natural qualities.* [my italics] Rosemary Harris has a natural grace'.[31] In the same interview, Castledine describes her reaction to Jane Birkin, the French film star and singer, whom she chose to play Andromache. Three years before, Birkin's lover and father had both died in the space of a week. Castledine said: 'Her pain was so tangible, it was like her skin was only barely holding her in. She is so unaffected, so herself. A

strange liaison, me and Jane, but there we are. She is so pure, like a gentle pained dove. Wonderful physically. Vocally? We'll see.' The implied reservations about Birkin's vocal abilities were proved justified since her voice was neither flexible nor powerful enough to be effective in the Olivier auditorium of the National Theatre. Castledine's emotional response to the actress as suffering woman had clearly blinded her to the limitations which can result from casting according to personal parallels or natural qualities, rather than according to technical experience and potential; Birkin's Andromache could never be more than the 'gentle pained dove', and so any challenging or subversive implications in Andromache's response to her situation could not be uncovered in this production. A director who sees Andromache as being an embodiment of pain barely held together by skin is not likely to examine closely the character's self-pity or pride in her reputation.

In a production where emphasis was being put on 'modern relevance' and on women being victimised by a male-run society, it was perhaps inevitable that the directors should have to use a different performance approach for the gods in the prologue. Poseidon was played by a black actor, Leo Wringer, and Athene by a male actor, Robert Pickavance. Whereas Poseidon's first appearance, metamorphosising from what was apparently a skeleton propped up against a spear, set an appropriate tone of other-worldly resignation, Athene entered in nightclub chanteuse lamé, wig and make-up, a sad, drag queen picking her way cautiously between the rubble and debris of Troy's overthrow. Clearly, the directors had decided to show a difference between the gods and the humans by giving the gods an obvious fancy dress look, (Poseidon in silver and blue make-up, with emblematic trident), but this meant that when the humans took over the stage, the gods were inevitably relegated to the area of fantasy: what was real in this world was human suffering, not the existence of gods, nor yet their involvement in or control over human beings.

A superficial reading of *Women of Troy* supports its interpretation as a play about the closures war effects to the lives of even those who survive; a lamentation for the passing of all that is good, and a wail of anguish over present sufferings. It does, after all, tell of the end of Troy, the

end of Hector's line, the end of Hecuba's life as queen. However, a very great deal of the play is about what will happen in the future; Cassandra's misunderstood visions of her future are followed by Andromache's entrance with the son who is shortly to be killed, and the burden of her lament is that Polyxena is better off than she since it is better to be dead (or never to have been born) than to live on in misery (636/7). The prologue indicates that the real tragic victims may be the returning Greeks who do not yet know how gravely they have offended the Gods and what is in store for them by way of Athene's retribution. Like the chorus, all the named characters speculate about their futures, and even Hecuba, who is nearest to death, has the line 'forward into a life of slavery' (1330). So a reading which does not raise questions in the audience's mind about the problems of surviving a war and the desertion of one's gods, both for victims and for winners, is one which does not do justice to Euripides' play.

More female voices: The RSC's *The Phoenician Women*

At the end of the year of the RNT's *Women of Troy*, Britain's other national theatre company, the RSC, offered another woman director the chance to experiment with an ancient Greek text. Katie Mitchell had worked with the Classics on a Shoestring company on a number of well-known texts and had indeed, in 1991, directed the company in a production [OUdb223] of *Women of Troy* (also in Kenneth McLeish's translation) which played at various small space venues, including the Gate Theatre in London.[32] She was offered The Other Place as a venue, and chose to direct a rarely performed Euripides play: *The Phoenician Women* [OUdb211]. Asked at an 'In Conversation' session held at The Other Place in December 1995, why she had chosen this play at this time, she said that in part it was because of what it seemed to her to be saying about the horrors of civil war, and the resonances this theme had at a time when civil war had come home to Europeans with the ongoing struggle in Bosnia.

Though Mitchell's technical team was strongly female, this was not, as might have been thought, a deliberate choice or feminist statement. Mitchell said that: 'Over a period of five years I have

simply accrued a group of collaborators who work with me on most of the shows I do and who are, by chance, female'.[33] But her feminist loyalty is apparent from another answer, given to the question: 'Would you wish to try all-male casting for a Greek play?'; No', she wrote, 'I wouldn't particularly want to do an all male production: I don't really see a point to it! Other than it being another way of taking jobs away from women in the classical theatre.' In fact, her doubling of all the named characters, except Tiresias, with members of the Chorus meant that what Euripides wrote as a chorus of Phoenician women - the most beautiful of their towns, sent as dedicatees to the temple of Apollo - became a group of pilgrims of mixed age and gender, individualised in rehearsal by a methodic 'working out of each character's history and background'. In the programme cast list and in the prompt copy, each chorus member has a name, and in most cases, even when the actor was male, the name is female (Daniel Goode was 'Semelle', Sean Murray, 'Ariadne', and Christopher Middleton, 'Europa'). Through this approach, the Grecian frieze of beautiful women was subjected to a feminist realisation of individuality. Paradoxically, the changing of the singular personal pronouns of the first two sections of the parodos to plural 'we' and 'us' increased this stress on the individual since, if this section is sung in unison in a singular voice, it suggests a single, iconic identity, whereas the plural acknowledges that the chorus, even when it speaks or sings as one, is made up of many individuals. Moreover, whereas the performances at Stratford had the chorus dressed in non period-specific robes with the look of nuns' habits or caftans, when the production transferred to the Pit at the Barbican in London, the costumes had been revised and the Chorus wore long coats, very full skirted but with modern touches such as lapels, buttons and pockets. This change shifted the period feel of the play from mid-European pre- or early-historic to nearer to a twentieth-century Serbo-Croat setting - in line, that is, with Mitchell's ideas about the play's resonances for a modern audience.[34]

The individualising of the Chorus was in line with the overall approach to characterisation in the production; Mitchell was anxious to show the human beings behind or inside the mythical or iconic figures. Her Jocasta (Lorraine Ashbourne), for example, was encouraged to play, in Mitchell's words, the 'psychological truth rather than the status' of queenship. However, there is

a danger in reducing the large-scale characters of tragedy to the level of small-screen drama. Edith Hall, reviewing the production for the *TLS*,[35] suggested that the final episode of dispute over Polyneices' corpse failed in part because the casting of Lucy Whybrow as an 'ethereal ... girlish' Antigone with shining blonde hair and pristine white dress was 'catastrophically incongruous in the grimy, gritty context ... not least because her mother and others have adopted Lancashire accents'.

'Realism' also stopped short of presenting Jocasta as the old woman she should be - she is, after all, both mother and grandmother of adult children. Lorraine Ashbourne was just credible as the mother of Antigone, Polyneices and Eteocles, but not as the mother of Oedipus, too. The prompt book reveals that telling cuts were made - for example at 302/4, in the translation used (David Thompson's) Jocasta's description of herself tottering out of the house to greet Polyneices - 'Old, slow and unsteady' - was dropped and any hesitancy in Jocasta's entry was attributable, less to her age than to her emotions on seeing her errant son again. It is worthwhile considering why Mitchell made this decision in casting and representation of the woman who, in this play, has a similar status to that of Hecuba in *Women of Troy*. Perhaps she wanted to accentuate the vitality and strength of Jocasta, and so heighten, for a modern audience, the tragedy of her suicide. For Euripides' audience, the height of Jocasta's tragedy must surely have been the news of her sons' intention to meet in single combat; she has already lost the *agon* with Eteocles, and foreseen the fulfilment of Oedipus's curse on his sons. Her exit to the battlefield at 1281 is with a forlorn hope: 'I can live again/If we forestall them. If not, their death is mine' (trs. Thompson, 1988). It is a hope which a modern audience which does not know the story may entertain, but which Euripides' audience would have recognised as signalling Jocasta's final exit. In support of Mitchell's representation of Jocasta as a middle-aged rather than an old and enfeebled woman, it must be acknowledged that Euripides chooses to have his Jocasta in this play die a 'manly' death by sword on the battlefield, in contrast to the alternative myth, which Sophocles uses in *Antigone*, of Jocasta stabbing herself inside the palace. However, we cannot be certain what Euripides' intentions were, or how this parody of a heroic death would have been received; perhaps its verging on the grotesque deepened the pathos of the situation (as, in the Player's

speech in *Hamlet*, does the description of old Priam 'striking too short at Greeks/His antique sword, repugnant to command'), or perhaps the image of an old woman wielding a man's weapon against her own body served as a paradigm of the disordered and unnatural situation in which Thebes finds herself.

At all events, in her response to my query about the lack of queenliness in this Jocasta, Mitchell acknowledged,that:

> Lorraine plays the psychological truth but not the status of 'queenship' (whatever that means today). At no stage in her life story did [Jocasta] take any real political power/responsibility - she seemed to let men do things for her and to her ... Jocasta does, however, have great intellectual stature and perhaps that is something Lorraine is not yet confident with. Perhaps that is the muscle that is missing.

It may be that in striving for the 'real woman' in this representation of Jocasta, the iconic elements - queen, mother bereft, woman who (albeit unwittingly) transgressed against taboos - had to go, and so, too, did the character's powerlessness - which Mitchell implicitly seems, in her comments about Jocasta's passivity, to object to. The actress represented the character as a woman still strong in body as in will, but not as a woman of high status and great intellect, ravaged by her sense of doomed guilt. Jocasta has no physical power left; she has only the powers of rhetoric, moral persuasion and the authority which she may expect to have over her sons because of their filial affection. Ashbourne's bare-armed, strong-jawed Jocasta might well, one felt, have knocked her sons' heads together and sent them off to do their homework.

The fact that this Jocasta could not control her sons, although represented as a vital and strong woman, was, however, a way of reinforcing the message that when men are taken over by ambition for power or by resentment or anger, there is little that woman or, indeed, man, (for Menoeceus sacrifices his life in vain) can do to dissuade them from the violence which will bring about destruction of the whole community. Mitchell had in her mind the present example of the Bosnian conflict and in a number of ways she pointed resonances for the present time in the play. First, she represented her Jocasta as less important as iconic figure, queen and cursed woman than as a credible mother whose sons were locked on a course of sibling rivalry which could only end with their deaths. Secondly, in using a mixed gender cast, she rejected any

suggestion that this is a play about the suffering that men inflict on women through war, since men, women and children (Antigone and Menoeceus) from the same family but on both sides of the conflict, and even those distantly related by ancestral ties (the Phoenician Women), are all sufferers in internecine war. Thirdly, the music and sound employed suggested Eastern European origins, and the additional chants for the chorus were suggestive at times of ancient Greek, but at times, of Serbo-Croat.

Yet while trying to suggest the 'relevance' of the Theban civil war to modern parallels and the 'reality' of the ancient Greek myth, Mitchell had also wanted to set up a world of unreality; to recreate the experience of more primitive theatre-going conditions. This is not to say that she had any intention of trying to reproduce Athenian theatre conditions c. 409. Rather, by a number of devices, she tried to 'remove all [the] clutter [of modern theatre-going] - to somehow purify/focus the viewer before the beginning of the story'. So, new and rather uncomfortable bench seating was set up in The Other Place; no programmes or publicity pictures were available before the performance; audience members were presented with sprigs of thyme on their entry into the auditorium, which was perfumed with incense and dimly lit with tiny lamps. The chorus made use of sound bowls to accompany their speeches and to intensify particular moments in the action. The intention was to work on the audience's senses rather than its intellect, and to put emphasis on the experience of watching the telling of a story. Mitchell agreed that audiences get nervous when certain props (programmes, posters, interval drinks) are removed but believed that this feeling of vulnerability helps to sensitise the audience to the experience of theatre. And indeed the combination of the unexpected - in terms of theatre conditions, the inventive use of chorus movement, and sound both taped and live - with the familiar - in terms of human emotions or behaviour - did make for a vivid and memorable performance. But it was not a theatre experience which produced an overwhelming feeling, either of sympathy with any one character (since the text itself fragments focus and hence, possible sympathy) or of anger or protest against the inhumanity, or the *hubris* of mankind.

No gods appear in the play, but Dionysus and Ares were clearly seen by Mitchell as the major opposing divine forces - female and male guardians respectively. Bacchic rituals and ferocious war dances were suggested in the chorus movement, but it is less easy to imply the powerful background influence of Apollo, whose oracle predestined the tragedy of Oedipus and of the Theban royal house. The Phoenician women are not simply witnesses and mourners for the dead of Thebes, distantly related but not actually involved in the civil war; they are a constant visual reminder that proper respect and dues have not been paid to Apollo, since the internecine war caused by the *hubris* of men prevents their progress to the shrine at Delphi. Because of their important function as observers and commentators on the action, it may therefore actually be counterproductive to the integrity of the play to individualise the Phoenician Women.

Both of these examples of productions, in which women's voices protest about war, have been directed by women. In each case, aspects of the production have been subjected to adverse criticism by reviewers. This is not to say that the plays did not 'work' as theatre experiences, or that women are any more or less likely than men to direct Greek plays in a way that attracts adverse critical response. It is, however, an indication of the degree to which women now feel able to take control and to take risks.

Women, power and Greek tragedy

Fifth-century Greek theatre was a male preserve.[36] In the Great Dionysia especially (since this showed off Athens to other Greek and foreign visitors), the prestige and power of the body of Athenian citizens were publicly expressed and the Athenian value system was validated. Reference to a mythic-historical past combined with consciousness of present technical excellence in theatre to reaffirm, in a way that perhaps no other activity could, the Athenian citizen's belief in himself and his city. It was precisely because, unlike a sporting or military *agon*, the dramatic contest concerned pretence (elevating deceit to an art form), that it provided a secure context for the playing out, and hence the neutralising of, elements perceived as threatening or dangerous to the community of the *polis*. It is, moreover, a mark of the

confidence that a community feels about its identity if it can produce *and give hearing to* writers and artists who criticise it.[37] Modern respect for Athenian civilisation may be intensified by realisation that plays like Sophocles' *Philoctetes* and Euripides' *Women of Troy* and *The Phoenician Women*, as well as the comedies of Aristophanes, were produced and acclaimed during the period of the Peloponnesian Wars.

When Plato makes his 'Socrates' argue that the Guardians of the Republic should not be allowed to play the parts of women (or of slaves, or disgraceful or reprehensible men), he articulates the fear which, it might be said, theatre was invented to exorcise.[38] To a modern reader of *The Republic*, it seems incredible that no distinction is made at this point between men behaving badly (or in a way not appropriate for theatrical representation) and women just being. However, this distinction underlies Zeitlin's explanation of the necessity in Greek tragedy for men to be seen representing women, and, on behalf of the ordinary citizen, 'acting the woman'.[39] Whereas laws or rules (legal, moral, social) can control or define whether a man acts disgracefully or commendably towards his fellows, female nature was perceived as being intrinsically flawed, and yet powerful to the extent that men might be overcome by female-ness and be unable to protect themselves against it. So, acting female roles might well seem to offer as much of a threat to men as acting the roles of vicious or depraved men. How essential it must have been, therefore, that the power of female nature to creep up insidiously on a man should be examined and overcome by professional actors in public view.

The first way, then, in which the combination of women and power was perceived to be threatening to Greek men was the danger of the female *phusis* tainting or overcoming man's nature and man-made *nomoi*. A related danger was the power of Eros; what it could make women do, what it could make men do for the sake of women. Both these (male) areas of anxiety about women and power could be seen as arising from what was endemic to the human condition: male or female. In dramatising anxieties about how power wielded by women could destabilise or destroy a man or a community, tragedians also used instances from myth where women usurped male power, used what men perceived as female characteristics to gain their

own ends, or opposed 'male' *nomoi* with kinship claims expressed partly, but not wholly, in terms of women's experience.[40] As with discussion of relations with or attitudes to the gods, the heroic past, Athens' civic identity, or foreigners, the treatment in Greek tragedy of subversive or threatening women with power was by no means unambiguous, or dogmatically propagandist on behalf of male chauvinism. A dangerously powerful, or power-using, woman might be sympathetic, or excused on the grounds of her domination by a god, or distanced by time or ethnicity. What was of the essence was that she be put under the control of the form of the drama, and of the male practitioners who created and recreated her in writing and performance, and, ultimately, of the male judges who could pronounce on whether this particular representation of female power was laudable or even acceptable in the theatrical *agon*.

Women, power and English theatre

Late twentieth-century English theatre gives evidence of the increasing empowerment of women working as theatre practitioners. As late as 1982, when the RSC's London theatre complex opened at the Barbican, rivalling the RNT's South Bank site, Establishment theatre was still dominated by male directors. Certainly there had always been a strong female presence on the experimental fringes - Joan Littlewood, Buzz Goodbody - but the resident directors at Stratford and the NT had been almost exclusively male. Only in the 1980s did names like Jude Kelly, Phyllida Lloyd, Nancy Meckler, Katie Mitchell, Di Trevis and Deborah Warner begin to be familiar, and plays from two great periods of theatre activity, classical Greece and Elizabethan England, started to be entrusted, not just in fringe theatres but in major national and provincial repertory companies, to the hands of female directors, interpreters and designers. It might be expected that plays written by men, for performance by men to (even in Shakespeare's theatre) predominantly male audiences might receive some reshaping, some shifting of emphases from women theatre practitioners, of the kind which is suggested in the critique of the RNT *Women of Troy*. It is also the case that an apparent 'gender-blindness' can conceal a desire to adjust the inequality of importance accorded to men and women in ancient drama, as in the RSC *Phoenician Women,* in which Mitchell said she wanted 'to give the impression that the evening's

story was being told by one group, in which each individual had an equal contribution (lines aside)'.[41]

In interviews in 1987 and 1988, Caryl Churchill reviewed her experiences of writing for English theatre, and commented that being identified as a 'woman writer' would - if that seemed to place one in a lower category of writer - be objectionable, but that:

> If it means women themselves thinking about things they haven't thought about before, then you can actually feel very positive about the idea of being a woman writer, and obviously this is atttractive and powerful.[42]

Questioned about whether she felt there was a female aesthetic, she responded, in effect, that it was too early to say since there was not yet a body of female playwrights' work comparable to the bulk of existing plays written by men. What had occurred to her, long before she even started work on *Top Girls* (1982), was that there was a

> 'maleness' in the traditional structure of plays, with conflict and building in a certain way to a climax. But it's not something I think about very often. Playwriting will change not just because more women are doing it but because more women are doing other things as well.[43]

These personal views are indicative of Churchill's non-combative self-assurance with regard to her own craft, but they register ways in which female practitioners in theatre have, and will, realise power and gain authority: 'by thinking things they haven't thought about before', both in writing and in performing work for the stage. The corollary to this is that they may find new ways of reading ideas or 'thoughts' which *have* been around before, but not interpreted by what might be descibed as a 'female aesthetic', a term which may cover either a formal *or* a critical approach, or both.[44]

In an introduction to *Plays by Women: Volume I* (1982), Michelene Wandor had pointed out a positive aspect of awareness of male domination in the received theatrical tradition:

> it enables us to see a bias that can enrich our understanding of our received tradition, while at the same time recognising that a future theatre which has more women writing for it will itself introduce new concepts of subject matter.[45]

The example Wandor had just given to introduce this point about the values of recognising bias was Antigone - who could be seen as a female heroine, or, more properly, as a 'poignant and vulnerable cipher via which the issues of honour and loyalty *as they are experienced by men*, are

explored'. This issue of male construction of myth was one of the themes which Timberlake Wertenbaker explored in her 1988 retelling of the Procne, Philomele and Tereus story, *The Love of the Nightingale* [OUdb158]. A play which pictures women driven by abuse and disempowerment to use violence against men, *The Love of the Nightingale* implicitly asks how the interrogating 'female' can be privileged in a society conditioned by a 'male' need to resolve, or answer ambiguities by the exercise of power. The play ends with the murdered boy, Itys, in the company of his mother Procne, now a swallow, and his aunt Philomele, the nightingale. Procne has lost her voice, but Philomele can sing and speak but insists on the boy asking her questions before she will sing to him. On questions relating to her own experiences and emotions she can respond, but when the boy asks, 'What does wrong mean? ... What is right?', she cannot give an answer and retreats into song. What is being passed on from generation to generation, irrespective of gender, is not 'truth' (closure by way of answers) but the need to ask, or to encourage, questions.

An interrogating, open-ended, non-traditional, non-male approach to theatre is not likely, initially, to find favour with 'white male middle-class reviewers', as Betty Caplan, herself a theatre critic a well as a playwright, pointed out in an interview in 1994/5: 'the question of what is [a]'good' [play] remains complex'.[46] The critical values brought to bear on any innovatory work are, inevitably, those of a previous mode of reception. The actress Harriet Walter, speaking of being directed by women, expresses the dilemma of female theatre practitioners clearly:

> If a woman's production fails ... in a sense she has failed for all women directors. It is still the case that every time we do something publicly we are under pressure to represent women, and all the choices we make have to be right because any flaws or failures in a production will be put down to our gender.[47]

Walter saw pressure being exerted on women to perform as well as men (by the criteria set up by male-regulated conventions), but this pressure was not necessarily to be answered by women's attempting to *be* men. In *Top Girls*, Caryl Churchill wrote of the dilemma of women in the Britain of Margaret Thatcher who attempted to be superwomen by acting like men. And so, for feminists of the 1980s, there were uncanny resonances in those Greek tragedies which showed

the inevitable downfall of 'unnatural' women who even momentarily transgressed gender roles and presumed to be man-like.

A further development in the process of women's reclamation (or 'usurpation') of theatre is recent experimentation in women playing male characters. At the Haymarket, Leicester in 1996, Kathryn Hunter, from the Théâtre de Complicité, was directed by Helena Kaut-Howson in the lead role of Shakespeare's *King Lear*, and in the same year Deborah Warner directed Fiona Shaw (an actress with whom she had worked on Sophocles' *Electra* for the RSC in 1988) in the title role of *Richard II.* In the forum of Shakespeare performance, these were actually just two more in a long tradition of women playing men's roles, but it is perhaps only a matter of time before actresses attempt Greek male tragic roles.[48] It will be noticed that both the directors for the plays mentioned were women, so to some this kind of experiment may seem like feminist assertiveness or mere perversity, but there is invariably a good reason for attempting such cross-gender casting, either with regard to the reading of the lead character, or with regard to shedding new light on relationships within the play. *Pace* Harriet Walter's remarks about the need for women in theatre not to be seen to fail, what 'women's hands' may bring, even to commercial, Establishment theatre, is the will to experiment, to transgress usual boundaries, and if to fail, then, as Samuel Beckett might put it: 'Fail. Try again. Fail again. Fail better.'

Establishing a level *orchestra*

In English theatre tradition, performance reception of Shakespeare has been the major formative influence. Outside Britain, during the second half of this century, American, Japanese and East European theatre and fim-directors in particular re-created Shakespeare in new perfomance genres, and theatre theorist-practitioners like Brook, Kott, Marowitz and Ninagawa tried shock tactics on the Shakespeare canon, not out of any sense of duty to reviving the texts, but because they saw in them the potential for lively theatre which would play well in their own cultural contexts.[49] In England, however, the myth of a 'classical Shakespearean theatre' continues to dominate mainstream audience expectations about the performance of Shakespeare, and

although the RSC, the RNT and provincial repertory theatres might wish to lead experiment in this field, they are constrained by market demands to deliver the text, the whole text and very little more than the text. If, in terms of the English literary-dramatic canon, Shakespeare has been elevated to the status of 'god', it follows that his works attain the status of holy writ, and that his high priests are those of his descendants in his own image (male, white, English, middle-educated) who present themselves as delivering the holy writ in an untainted and 'authentic' way.[50] Whether justly or not, English theatre practitioners *en bloc* have therefore been credited by some of their non-English counterparts with being arrogant and parochial, certainly in the field of performing Shakespeare, but almost as certainly, by contagion, in theatre generally.[51]

To some extent, the material of Greek drama would seem to offer a more level playing-field for the exercise of innovatory theatre practice. Despite a degree of 'ownership' of Greek literature which nineteenth-century English scholarship and the public school system might seem to have staked out, Aeschylus, Sophocles and Euripides have, this century, become increasingly 'other' to the changing cultures of Britain. Not only are they long gone, but so too is their cultural context and the audiences for whom they wrote. Even for modern Greeks their plays require translation, and to non-Greeks or non-ancient-Greek-literate audiences, how much the more do their works need mediation by those who believe that the plays can speak to modern ears. Since Greek tragedy has not been appropriated by Greek theatre practitioners to the extent that, it might seem to non-Britons, Shakespeare has been by the English, there seems no reason why it may not be performed and re-created by any theatre companies; in Golder's ironical phrase: 'the Greeks are fair game'.[52] So, plays which were written for single, civic, religious occasion performance according to particular theatrical conventions are theatrically read through productions as diverse as it is possible to imagine one art form encompassing. As this study has shown, women's voices and women's guiding hands are increasingly found among those mediating Greek tragedy to modern audiences.

Questions, not answers

The perennial criticism of British theatre - that it is cramped and stultified by an 'English style' in acting and production - reappeared in Golder's review in *Arion*, 1996, of three productions of Greek plays which he had seen in 1992. He had found Diana Rigg's Medea 'anguished behind clenched teeth in that peculiarly English way, emoting through the thorax and not the body, evincing a wit more verbal than visceral'. Even worse, for him, was the RSC's production of *The Theban Plays*[53] in which a 'classical (British) style of declamation consorted oddly with Wertenbaker's prosodically flaccid prose', and the design scheme which substituted surrealism for realism or 'authenticity' seemed to Golder either grotesque or comic. (Oliver Taplin was to respond strongly to this, although not springing to the defence of British theatre so much as questioning *Arion*'s editorial line on selection for publication.[54])

The business of giving an account of a reading of a play in performance is problematic but must be attempted. It is problematic, in part, because at all points subjectivity necessarily plays a part, whether it be the theatre manager's instinct about whether a play should be staged, the translator or adaptor's innumerable personal choices during the process of preparing a playscript, the director's, designer's and actors' individual contributions, or the audience's individual or collective experience of being at a performance.[55] When a reviewer writes a response to the performance s/he experienced, the subjective becomes paramount, even when (as in the case of Herbert Golder) the review is for a scholarly audience who are *not* reading to find out if they should bother to pay good money to see this show.

The study of theatre relies very heavily on just such subjective responses, which are important precisely because they represent the experience of an individual in a particular audience at a particular performance. A prompt copy can record moves, cuts, cues; a production diary will reveal the conflicts, the highs and lows of the rehearsal period; a video may show how the play looked and sounded in performance, but only the reaction of the audience will tell how the piece worked (or for some, did not work) on stage. Performance histories of individual plays utilise the subjective responses of spectators and participants in the theatrical experience to give a

multi-faceted picture of how a specific production was received.[56] Every production of a play attempts to answer questions which are either in the text (relating to characterisation, motivation, internal conflicts, and so on) or are implied in the choice of this play for this particular time and audience. But there cannot be a definitive 'right' way to perform a play, nor definitive answers to all the questions. Even those who offer tentative solutions on questions of authenticity, or of how to translate alien cultural or social issues for a modern audience will very properly qualify their answers.[57] Theatre practitioners who are not also classicists may reasonably resent scholarly criticism of the answers they have offered if they can show that their productions achieved a hoped-for audience response. Apparently, then, there is still an impossibly wide gulf between those who find Greek tragedy linguistically, anthropologically, historically fascinating, and those who want to see how it can work with a modern audience.

The gulf is not, in truth, impossibly wide - or, if wide it is, each new production of a play throws another rope bridge across the divide. Increasingly, academics working in classics departments are helping to forward the realisation of Greek drama in modern theatres, whether through practical or advisory involvement in the process of production or through the criticism, analysis or recording of specific performances or productions.[58] It could be said that the 'male' preserve of Greek canonical texts has been infiltrated by 'feminising' influences. I would contest that even mainstream English theatre - that area which has in the past been stereotypified as cerebral, 'stiff-upper-lip' and male-dominated - has risen to the challenge of how (and why) ancient Greek drama should be performed in modern theatres. I am not suggesting that the process of bringing Dionysus back into theatre has begun solely because women practitioners are using their voices and hands; more, that female participation in theatre can be seen as symptomatic of that presence. The mistrusted, threatening power of the female other begins to be incorporated, and accordingly, rendered beneficial to the wider community, not in the same way, but in a way analogous to, the way that it was in the plays of the Athenian tragedians.

NOTES

1 See Taplin (1978, rep. 1993, 58ff.), on the semiotics of gesture of Greek tragedy.

2 Holst-Warhaft (1992), 3. The book draws on and develops Alexiou (1974).

3 See Hardwick (1993, 156) on Solon's legislation: 'The laws were not anti-female and probably not even directed at class rivalry but were an attempt to prevent *vertical* rivalry, that is, aristocratic families competing to display conspicuous wealth and following.'

4 ibid., 159-60, summarises the points made in the article about the criticisms and divisions Pericles was facing and his need to silence critics and to focus diverse interests on the problem of the war.

5 Stears in Blundell & Williamson (1998), 125.

6 The grief of Atossa in Aeschylus's *Persians* is a lone example of a real female character from recent history shown as admirable or sympathetic when giving vent to grief. But, of course, she is a barbarian. See Hall (1989) on the construction of Persian inferiority; and Hardwick (1996, 29) on the play's subversive shift of sympathy to the mourning woman of Persia (exemplified in Atossa).

7 Showalter in Bonner, Goodman, Allen, Janes, & King (1992), 74-6, records the shifts in the seventies and eighties from the first to the third stage of feminist criticism. The 'radical rethinking of the conceptual bounds of critical study' (76) aimed at in that third stage made it possible to begin to read <u>through</u> male literary and ideological constructions. Men's versions of women's voices were recognisable in Greek tragedy. Hall (in Easterling (1997), 125) suggests that Greek tragedy's 'Utopian tendency' could create 'egalitarian models of society even when they are inconceivable in practice', so that in tragedy: 'characters of diverse ethnicity, gender, and status all have the same right to express their opinions and the same verbal ability with which to exercise that right.'

8 Holst-Warhaft (1992), 122.

9 Whereas Barlow, in the introduction to her edition (1986, rev. 1993, 26), notes the recent massacre at Melos as a possible influence on Euripides' presentation of the story, Easterling (1997, 173) suggests that a more general reference to the sack and destruction of a Greek city is behind Euripides' choice. Sommerstein (in Pelling (1997), 72-3) reminds that the 'anti-war' feel of the play is often viewed as directed against the Athenian 'gung-ho' attitude which was to instigate the ill-fated Sicilian campaign. (See Thucydides on the Nicias/Alcibiades confrontation in *The History of the Peloponnesian War*, Book 6, 9-24.)

10 'The stature which the ruined Hecuba acquires in these final scenes recalls the special kind of nobility which the ruined Oedipus (in Sophocles' *O.C.*) possesses. This feeling for the nobility of an Oedipus, or a Hecuba, derives in part from the aura of almost superstitious awe with which the Greeks surround those necessarily great personages who had suffered the ultimate in woe and yet endured.' Conacher, in Segal (1983), 339.

11 The myth of the young English public schoolboy going to the front with his favourite Greek text in his kitbag has been promulgated in novel and film - *The English Patient* (1997) sparked a boom in sales of edited highlights of Herodotus's *Histories*. However, in a secondhand copy of a 1916 edition of Arthur S. Way's translation of the texts of *Iphigenia at Aulis, Rhesus, Hecuba, Helen* and *The Daughters of Troy*, I discovered a book marker appealing for books and magazines for 'the Camps Library', to be sent to 'prisoners and troops both at home and abroad'.

Presumably this was one Greek text not considered suitable morale-boosting reading for men at the frontline.

12 Macintosh, in Easterling (1997), 304.

13 Information about Thorndike's feelings on the production and her anecdote about the Cockney woman who congratulated her on the play ('... them Trojans was just like us. We've lost our sons and 'usbands in this bleedin' war, 'aven't we? ... That was a real play that was, dearie'), are to be found in Casson (1972, 64), and a splendid studio photo of Thorndike as Hecuba holding the body of Astyanax is in Fowler (1982, 25).

14 Cartledge, in Easterling (1997), 32.

15 In Easterling (1997), 282.

16 Suzuki's version of the play was subsequently revived for performance at Los Angeles in 1984, for tour in Europe, and for performance at the 1986 Chicago Festival of International Theatre. With his productions of the *Bacchae* (1978) and *Medea* (1986), the play formed part of a Japanese theatre response to Western classics in which the original text serves as springboard for a new performance text. See McDonald (1992, Chapters 1 & 3) on Suzuki's productions.

17 In this production, the Persians were played as Iraqis defeated in the Gulf War, and the result, as often happens when a production aims at shocking by 'modern relevance', was a loss of Aeschylus's dual vision of the outcome of war. See Hardwick (1996, 31-2) for a survey of the problems of this production, in which the evocation of sympathy for suffering innocents constituted something like a failure of nerve on the part of the translator, Auletta and Sellars, the director. Evocation of sympathy does not make a tragedy.

18 Goodwin & Hall (1983), 420.

19 Bond speaking in an unpublished interview with Salvatore Maiorana in 1981; in Roberts (185), 41.

20 *TLS*, March 31 1995; 'Under the drone of circling helicopters'. Cormack found the production 'intellectually lazy ... It might have been better if less time (and money) had been spent on the obvious moralising and the showy pyrotechnics that nightly re-enact the destruction of Troy ... and more had been spent on exploring the moral and rhetorical complexities of this most complex of Euripidean dramas'.

21 See the section on Common Ground's *The Fence* in Chapter 2: The *Bacchae*.

22 See 'Facing Up to the Muses' in Astley (1991, 448-9) for Harrison's account of the work in progress and its reception by one 'radical' American journal, which found his draft 'too pacifist and too obscene'. Here, too (448), Harrison describes his two representations of 'Muses' which hung on the wall of his study - one of them a copy of a Giulio Romano, the other a picture of Greenham women dancing on a nuclear bunker.

23 *The Independent*, March 15 1995, Annie Castledine in interview with Georgina Brown.

24 ibid.

25 *TLS*, March 31 1995. The critical analyses of the productions in this chapter utilise, in addition to reviews held on the OUdb, programme notes, my own (unpublished) reviews, and notes and sketches made at specific performances.

26 See Barlow (1986, rep. 1993, 27-30) on the possible thematic links between the three plays.

27 This term is used by Taplin (1993, 80) to describe 'comic vase-paintings which parody or travesty serious vase-paintings'. Whether it may be used to describe a reverse process, as I am here suggesting, where the well-known image of a still from a comic film is visually referred to in tragic context, I am not sure, but the word is very useful when one is talking of cross-genre or even cross-cultural comparisons.

28 See Goldhill's comments on Euripides' use of Gorgias's *Encomium of Helen*, in Easterling (1997), 146-7. For comment on representations of Helen on English stages from the Renaissance, see my forthcoming article, 'Hellish Images of Heavenly Beauty: Representations of Helen on the late twentieth-century English Stage'.

29 Jax Williams was the other black actress in the cast, the one black person in a chorus remarkable for its multi-ethnicity.

30 In Andrei Serban's *An Ancient Trilogy* (1992, in Britain), vocal music and sounds substituted for language. See Hartigan (1995, 151) and Macintosh in Easterling (1997), 319-20.

31 See n.23.

32 Mitchell's Hecuba had been Paola Dionisotti who had come to establishment theatre (a season with the RSC in 1978) by way of radical and fringe theatres and had never lost belief in the value of experimental work.

33 All quotations are from Katie Mitchell's letter to me in response to a 'paper interview', 5 December 1995.

34 Another modernising change which I believe was made - though I cannot be sure from the rather small contact prints available - was the jettisoning for London of the beautiful and intricate body painting or tatoos which Polyneices and Eteocles wore for the Stratford run and which gave a sense of archaism to the design.

35 Hall, 'Bronzed and bleeding', *TLS*, 10 November, 1995.

36 Not only was theatre written, performed and, possibly, consumed only by men, but its function was to support a male-run civic ideology. See Goldhill (1990) and Cartledge in Easterling (1997), 3-35.

37 One thinks particularly of Aristophanes' topical comedy - for example, *The Acharnians* or *Lysistrata*, but in fact, comment on or criticism of contemporary situations becomes much more challenging to authority when it is carried, however implicitly, by tragedy.

38 *The Republic*, 395.c,d,e - 396, trs. Lee (1955, rev. 1987), 95.

39 Zeitlin (1996).

40 Character types which could be cited as examples of these categories are Clytemnestra, Medea or Helen, and Antigone, or Jocasta in *The Phoenician Women*.

41 See n.33.

42 Interview with Geraldine Cousin, in Fitzsimmons (1989), 89.

43 Interview with Betsko & Koenig, in Fitzsimmons (1989), 87.

44 See Showalter in Bonner, Goodman, Allen, Janes & King (1992), 75-8, on the female aesthetic in writing and criticism.

45 Wandor (1982), 11.

46 Caplan, in interview, in Goodman (1996), 187.

47 Rutter (1988), xxi.

48 Russell (1996) investigates nineteenth-century cross-dressed performances and shows that, whereas some actresses may have been pandering to a public which relished the gender confusion and exposure of leg such experiments occasioned, most simply wanted to act the best roles around in serious theatre (Hamlet and Romeo, for example), and made a good case for their taking on these male roles by finding the 'feminine' in them. Russell (149-52) points out that those actresses who frequently played male roles seemed to make a point of displaying the respectability and conventionality of their private lives, so that there was less occasion for a public to dismiss or reject them as freaks or 'unnatural' women.

49 In film: Orson Welles, Kurosawa, Zeffirelli, Kozintsev (USSR), Luhrman. For statements on theory and practice, see Kott (1965), Brook (1968), Marowitz (1991).

50 King (1992), charting the four-phase development of post-colonial drama, comments that the inevitable grounding of early post-colonial writers like Soyinka and Walcott in an orthodox (British) tradition of canonical literature shows in their use of dramatic verse. For a comparison of responses to the Greek inheritance, see Hardwick in Emlyn-Jones, Hardwick & Purkis (1992, 227-48), on Logue, Walcott and Heaney, and also (forthcoming), 'Classical Texts in Post-Colonial Literatures: Consolation, Redress and New Beginnings'.

51 See, particularly, Marowitz (1991), 115-21 and especially Number Three on his list of 'Seven American Misconceptions'.

52 Golder (1996), 180.

53 Golder refers critically to this production as 'The Oedipus Trilogy' - in fact, it was never advertised as such; Wertenbaker's edition is titled *The Thebans*.

54 See Taplin and Golder in *Arion*, 1998.

55 A helpful contribution to studies in performance history is the book which collates interviews with theatre practitioners under the editorial chairmanship of an academic; see Rutter (1988), Goodman (1996), and Brockbank, Smallwood & Jackson (1985-93).

56 As in other respects, Shakespeare scholarship led the way: Salgado's *Eyewitnesses of Shakespeare* provided a model of performance historiography through subjective source material. Editions in the *Shakespeare in Production* and *Shakespeare in Performance* series invite Greek drama imitation, and Edith Hall's promised performance history of *Medea* must, surely, be the first in a line. Hartigan (1995), on American reception of ancient drama, takes a similar line to mine, but relating the popularity of individual plays to periods in America's history, and Macintosh and Burian (in Easterling, 1997) take a chronological approach.

57 For example, Taplin (1978, rep. 1993), in his 1985 preface, acknowledges that 'the place of books like this is to suggest and to prompt rather than to dictate to the professional theatre' - and this from the man who collaborated with Harrison and Hall on the 1981 *Oresteia*. Also, see Walton (1980) and Wiles (1997) on the importance of looking back in order to go forward. Goldhill, in McAuslan & Walcot (1993, 11), writing of the need to formulate a theory of performance criticism, castigates the 'trivial posturing of the "what I would do if I were the director" sort'.

58 Instances of classicists advising, directing, or translating for performance are too many to list in full; different manifestations of such involvement are exampled by: pre-performance lectures by academics for The Actors of Dionysus; the continuing activity of Chloë Productions under the aegis of the Institute of Classical Studies, and Russell Shone's reconstructions of *Andromeda* and

Trackers; David Wiles's reconstruction performance of *Hypsipyle* for the 1997 Classical Association Conference; the establishment of the Oxford Archive of Greek Theatre; the Open University Reception of Greek Texts and Images Database; Sally Goetsch's editorship of *Didaskalia*. Conferences on ancient drama (e.g. the 1997 Saskatoon 'Crossing the Stages' Conference) regularly incorporate practical drama workshops and accept papers and presentations about productions in which participants have had a major advisory or directorial role.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

1 TEXTS, COMMENTARIES & TRANSLATIONS

AESCHYLUS *Agamemnon, The Choephori, & The Eumenides,* in *The Oresteian Trilogy,* P. Vellacott, trs., London, 1956, rep. 1962

ARISTOPHANES *Thesmophoriazusae*, A. H. Sommerstein, ed., trs. & notes, Warminster, 1993

Ecclesiazusae, B. B. Rogers, ed. & trs., Loeb, Cambridge, Mass., 1924

The Wasps, The Poet and the Women (Thesmophoriazusae), & The Frogs, D. Barrett, trs. & intr., London, 1964

Lysistrata, The Acharnians, The Clouds, A. H. Sommerstein, trs. & intr., London, 1973

ARISTOTLE *Poetics*, M. Heath, trs. & intr., Harmondsworth, 1996

EURIPIDES: *BACCHAE*

Bacchae E. R. Dodds, ed. & comm., Oxford, 2nd. ed., 1960

Bacchae R. Seaford, intr., comm. & trs., Warminster, 1996, rev. 1997

The Bacchae W. Arrowsmith, trs. & intr. (1959), in *Greek Tragedies, Volume 3*, ed. D. Grene & R. Lattimore, Chicago, 1972

The Bacchae of Euripides G. S. Kirk, trs. & intr., Cambridge, 1970

The Bacchae & Other Plays P. Vellacott, rev., trs. & intr., Harmondsworth, 1972

EURIPIDES: *HELEN*

Helen A. M. Dale, ed., intr. & comm., Oxford, 1971

Helen J. Michie & C. Leach, trs., with intr. & notes, Oxford & N.Y., 1981

EURIPIDES: *HIPPOLYTUS*

Hippolytus M. Halleran, intr., trs. & commentary, Warminster, 1995

Hippolytus D. Kovaks, ed. & trs., Loeb, Cambridge, Mass., 1995

Hippolytus D. Grene, trs. (1942), in *Euripides I*, ed. D. Grene & R. Lattimore, Chicago, 1955

Hippolytus P. Vellacott, trs. (1953), in *Euripides: Three Plays*, Harmondsworth, rep. 1972

EURIPIDES: *MEDEA*

Medea D. L. Page, intr. & comm., Oxford, 1938

Medea D. Kovacs, ed. & trs., Loeb, Cambridge, Mass., 1994

Medea R. Warner, trs. (1944), in *Euripides I*, ed. D. Grene & R. Lattimore, Chicago, 1955

Medea P. Vellacott, trs. & intr. in *Euripides: 'Medea' and Other Plays*, Harmondsworth, 1963

Medea J. Brooks, trs. (1988), in *Euripides: Plays I*, intr. J. Michael Walton, London, rep. 1998

Medea A. Elliot, trs. (1992), intr. N. Dromgoole (1993), London, rep. 1994

EURIPIDES: *ORESTES*

Orestes K. McLeish, trs. & intr., in *Euripides Plays IV*, ed. & intr. J. Michael Walton, London, 1997

EURIPIDES: *PHOENICIAN WOMEN*

Phoenician Women E. Craik, ed. & trs. & comm., Warminster, 1988

The Phoenician Women D. Thompson, trs. (1988) in *Euripides: Plays: I*, ed. & intr. J. Michael Walton, London, 1998

EURIPIDES: *WOMEN OF TROY*

Trojan Women S. A. Barlow, intr., trs. & comm., Warminster, 1986, rev. 1993

EURIPIDES *Selected Fragmentary Plays Vol. I* , ed., intr., trs. & comm., C. Collard, M. J. Cropp & K. H. Lee, Warminster, 1995

HERODOTUS *The Histories,* trs. A. de Selincourt (1954), rev. & intr. J. Marincola, Harmondsworth, 1996

HESIOD *Works & Days*, M. L. West, text & comm., Oxford, 1978

HOMER *The Iliad,* R. Fagles, trs., intr. & notes, B. Knox, Harmondsworth, 1990, rep. 1991
The Iliad, M. Hammond, trs. & intr., Harmondsworth, 1986
The Odyssey, E. V. Rieu, trs. & intr., Harmondsworth, 1946

PLATO *The Republic,* D. Lee, trs. & intr., London, 1955, rev. 1974 & 1987

SENECA *Four Tragedies and Octavia*, E. F. Watling, trs. & intr., Harmondsworth, 1966

SOPHOCLES: ***ANTIGONE***

Antigone A. Brown, ed., trs. & notes, Warminster, 1987

Antigone T. Wertenbaker, trs. & adapt., in *The Thebans*, London, 1992

SOPHOCLES:

Electra K. McLeish, trs., in *Sophocles Plays: Two*, intr. J. Michael Walton, London, 1979, rep. 1994

SOPHOCLES: *Fragments,* H. Lloyd-Jones, ed. & trs., Loeb, Cambridge, Mass., 1996

THUCYDIDES *History of the Peloponnesian War*, R. Warner trs. (1954), intr. & notes, M. I. Finley, Harmondsworth, 1972

2 VERSIONS

Bacchae

BOWEN, J. *The Disorderly Women*, London, 1969

CHURCHILL, C. *A Mouthful of Birds*, London, 1986

DUFFY, M. *Rites* (1969), rep. with Afterword in *Plays by Women: Volume Two*, ed. M. Wandor, London, 1983

SOYINKA, W. *The Bacchae of Euripides: A Communion Rite*, London, 1973

Medea

HARRISON, T. *Medea: A Sex-War Opera* in *Dramatic Verse 1973-1985*, Newcastle upon Tyne, 1985

KENNELLY, B. *Medea* (version), Newcastle upon Tyne, 1991

Hippolytus

HARRISON, T. *Phaedra Brittanica*, in *Dramatic Verse 1973-1985*, Newcastle upon Tyne, 1985

KANE, S. *Phaedra's Love*, London, 1996

RACINE, J. *Phaedra* (1677), J. Cairncross, trs. & intr., Harmondsworth, 1970

RUDKIN, D. *Hippolytus* (version), London, 1980, and the RSC prompt copy (1979)

Women of Troy

BOND, E. *The Woman*, London, 1979

KENNELLY, B. *The Trojan Women* (version), Newcastle upon Tyne, 1993

The Odyssey

WALCOTT, D. *The Odyssey: A Stage Version*, London, 1993

Antigone

ANOUILH, J. *Antigone*, trs. L. Galantière, London, 1960

PAULIN, T. *The Riot Act*, London, 1985

3 POST-CLASSICAL & MODERN TEXTS

AYRTON, M. (1967), *The Maze Maker*, London

BOLT, R. (1960), *A Man For All Season*, London

CHURCHILL, C. (1976), *Vinegar Tom*, rep. in *Plays by Women: Volume One*, ed. M. Wandor, London, 1982
---------- (1982), *Top Girls*, London
---------- (1983), *Fen*, London

COMMON GROUND (1985), *The Fence*, in *Peace Plays*, ed. S. Lowe, London

FRIEL, B. (1984), *Living Quarters (After Hippolytus)*, in *Selected Plays*, London

FUGARD, A. (1974), *The Island*, in *Statements: Three Plays*, Oxford

HANDKE, P. (1997), *Peter Handke: Plays I*, London

HARRISON, T. (1985), *Dramatic Verse 1973-1985*, Newcastle upon Tyne

JELLICOE, A. (1958, rep. 1964), *The Sport of My Mad Mother*, London

MARLOWE, C., *Dr. Faustus*, ed. J. D. Jump, Revels Series, Manchester, 1962, rep. 1978

RENAULT, M. (1958), *The King Must Die*, London
---------- (1962), *The Bull From the Sea*, London

RUDKIN, D. (1963), *Afore Night Come*, in *New English Dramatists 7*, intr. J. W. Lambert (1963, rep. 1967), Harmondsworth
---------- (1976), *The Sons of Light*, RSC prompt copy

SHAFFER, P. (1964), *The Royal Hunt of the Sun*, Harmondsworth
---------- (1973), *Equus*, London

---------- (1980), *Amadeus*, Harmondsworth

SHAKESPEARE, W., *Cymbeline*, ed. J. M. Nosworthy (1955), The Arden Shakespeare, London
---------- *Macbeth*, ed. K. Muir (1979), The Arden Shakespeare, London

WEISS, P. (1965), *The Marat/Sade*, adapt. G. Skelton, verse adapt. A. Mitchell, London

WERTENBAKER, T. (1989), *The Love of the Nightingale*, London

4 CRITICAL WORKS

ALEXIOU, M. (1974), *The Ritual Lament in Greek Tradition*, Cambridge

AMIES, B., B. WARREN & R. WATLING (1986), *Social Drama: Towards a Therapeutic Curriculum*, London

ANDREWS, E. (1995), *The Art of Brian Friel*, Basingstoke

ARTHUR, M. B. (1973), 'Early Greece: The Origins of Western Attitudes Towards Women', *Arethusa*, Vol. 6, no. 1, Spring 1973, 7-58

ASHCROFT, B., G. GRIFFITHS & H. TIFFIN, eds (1995), *Post-Colonial Studies Reader*, London

ASTLEY, N., ed. (1991), *Tony Harrison*, Newcastle upon Tyne

ASTON, E. & G. SAVONA (1991), *Theatre as Sign-System*, London & N.Y.

BACON, H. (1995), 'The Chorus in Greek Life and Drama', *Arion 3.1*, Fall 1994/Winter 1995, 6-24

BANHAM, M., ed. (1995), *The Cambridge Guide to Theatre*, Cambridge

BARBER, S. (1993), *Antonin Artaud: Blows and Bombs*, London

BARLOW, S. A. (1996), 'Euripides' *Medea*: A subversive play?', in Griffiths (1996), 36-45

BASSNETT-McGUIRE, S. (1978), 'Translating Spatial Poetry: Theatre Texts in Performance', in Holmes, Lambert & Van den Broeck (1978)

BEARD, M. & J. HENDERSON (1997), 'The Play of Desire: Casting Euripides' *Hippolytus*', *Arion 4.3* Winter 1997, 80-130

BEAUMAN, S. (1982), *The RSC: A History of Ten Decades*, Oxford.

BERNAL, M. (1987), *Black Athena: The Afroasiatic Roots of Classical Civilisation*, London & New Brunswick

BLUNDELL, M.W. (1989, rep. 1991), *Helping Friends and Harming Enemies*, Cambridge
---------- (1995), *Women in Ancient Greece*, London
---------- & WILLIAMSON, eds (1998), *The Sacred and the Feminine in Ancient Greece*, London

BOARDMAN, J. (1964, rev. 1985, 1994), *Greek Art*, London

BOEDECKER, D. (1997), 'Becoming Medea: Assimilation in Euripides', in Clauss & Johnston (1997), 127-48

BOLT, R. (1992), interview with Giles Croft in *Platform Papers 1: Translation*, Royal National Theatre, London

BOLTON, G. (1984), *Drama as Education*, Harlow.

BONNER, F., L. GOODMAN, R. ALLEN, L. JANES & C. KING, eds (1992), *Imagining Women: Cultural Representations and Gender*, Cambridge

BROCKBANK, P., R. SMALLWOOD & R. JACKSON, eds (1985-93), *Players of Shakespeare*, 3 vols., Cambridge

BROOK, P. (1968), *The Empty Space*, London
---------- (1988), *The Shifting Point: 40 Years of Theatrical Experience 1945-87*, London

CAIRNS, D. & S. RICHARDS (1988), *Writing Ireland: Colonialism, Nationalism and Culture*, Manchester

CAMERON, A. & A. KUHRT (1983, rev. 1993), *Images of Women in Antiquity*, London & Sydney

CARTLEDGE, P. (1993), *The Greeks: A Portrait of Self and Others*, Oxford
---------- (1997), ' 'Deep Plays': Theatre as process in Greek civic life', in Easterling (1997), 3-35

CASE, S-E. (1988), *Feminism and Theatre*, Basingstoke
---------- (1991), 'The Power of sex: English Plays by Women 1958-88', in *New Theatre Quarterly*, Vol. VII, Number 27, August 1991, 238-45

CASSON, J. (1972), *Lewis and Sybil: A Memoir*, London

CHURCHILL, C. (1988), 'The Common Imagination and the Individual Voice', interview with Geraldine Cousin, *New Theatre Quarterly*, Vol. IV, Number 13, February, in Fitzsimmons (1989)

CLARK, G. (1989, with *add.* 1993), *Women in the Ancient World, Greece & Rome, New Surveys in the Classics No. 21*, Oxford

CLAUSS, J. J. & S. I. JOHNSTON, eds (1997), *Medea: Essays on Medea in Myth, Literature, Philosophy and Art*, Princeton

COLEMAN, K. M. (1990), 'Fatal Charades: Roman Executions Staged as Mythological Enactments', *Journal of Roman Studies*, Vol. lxxx, (1990), 44-73

CONACHER, D. J. (1983, rep. 1988), 'The *Trojan Women*', in Segal (1988), 332-9

CROALLY, N.T. (1994), *Euripidean Polemic: The Trojan Women and the Function of Poetry*, Cambridge

CROW, B. & C. BANFIELD (1996), *An Introduction to Post-Colonial Theatre*, Cambridge

CSAPO, E. & W. J. SLATER (1994), *The Context of Ancient Drama*, Michigan

CULHAM, P. (1986), 'Ten years after Pomeroy: Studies of the image and reality of women in antiquity', in *Helios, 13.2*, 9-30

DICKINSON, H. (1969), *Myth on the Modern Stage*, Chicago

DODD, N. & W. HICKSON, (1971), *Drama and Theatre in Education*, London

DOLLIMORE, J. (1991), *Sexual Dissidence: Augustine to Wilde, Freud to Foucault,* Oxford

DOVER, K. J. (1973), 'Classical Greek Attitudes to Sexual Behaviour', *Arethusa*, Vol. 6, no. 1, Spring 1973, 59-74

EASTERLING, P., ed. (1997), *The Cambridge Companion to Greek Tragedy*, Cambridge
---------- & J.V. MUIR, eds (1985), *Greek Religion and Society*, Cambridge

EDMUNDS, L. (1992),'The blame of Karkinos: theorizing theatrical space', in Zimmerman, (1992), 214-39

ELLIOT, A. (1993), 'Translating Poetic Forms' in *Translation & Literature*, Vol. 2, 67-83, Edinburgh

EMLYN-JONES, C., L. HARDWICK & J. PURKIS, eds (1992), *Homer: Readings and Images*, London

FINLEY, M. I. (1981), *The Legacy of Greece*, Oxford

FITZSIMMONS, L., ed. (1989), *File on Churchill*, London

FLASHAR, H. (1991), *Inzenierung der Antike: Das griechische Drama auf der Bühne der Neuzeit 1585-1990*, Munich

FOLEY, H. P., ed. (1981), *Reflections of Women in Antiquity, Women's Studies, 8.1 & 8.2*, N.Y., London & Paris
---------- (1985), *Ritual Irony: Poetry and Sacrifice in Euripides,* Ithaca, N.Y.

FOWLER, J., ed. (1982), *Images of Show Business From the Theatre Museum, V & A*, London

GARBER, M. (1992), *Vested Interests*, London

GARDNER, J. F. (1989), 'Aristophanes and Male Anxiety: The Defence of the *Oikos*', in McAuslan & Walcot (1996), 146-57

GENTZLER, E. (1993), *Contemporary Translation Theories*, London

GENET, J. & E. HELLEGOUARC'H, eds. (1991), *Studies in Contemporary Irish Theatre*, Caen

GIRARD, R. (1972, trs. P. Gregory, 1977), *Violence and the Sacred,* Baltimore

GOLDER, H. (1995), Preface to 'The chorus in Greek Tragedy and Culture', *Arion 3.1,* Fall 1994/Winter 1995, 1-5
---------- (1996) 'Geek Tragedy - Or, Why I'd Rather Go to the Movies', *Arion 4.1,* Spring 1996, 174-209

GOLDHILL, S. (1986), *Reading Greek Tragedy*, Cambridge
---------- (1990), 'The Great Dionysia and Civic Ideology', in Winker & Zeitlin (1990), 97-129
---------- (1993), 'Reading Performance Criticism', in McAuslan & Walcot (1993), 1-11
---------- (1997), 'Modern critical approaches to Greek tragedy', in Easterling (1997), 324-47

GOODMAN, L. (1993), *Contemporary Feminist Theatres*, London & N.Y.
---------- with J. DE GAY (1996), *Feminist Stages*, Amsterdam

GOODWIN, J. ed. & P. HALL (1983), *Peter Hall's Diaries*, London

GOULD, J. P. (1980), 'Law, Custom and Myth: Aspects of the Social Position of Women in Classical Athens', *JHS* (Vol. C, Centenary Issue), 38-60

GRAVES, R. (1955), *Greek Myths*, London

GREEN, J. R. (1994), *Theatre in Ancient Greek Society*, London

GREEN, R. & E. HANDLEY (1995), *Images of the Greek Theatre*, London

GRIFFIN, J. (1996), 'Antigone: Right or Wrong?' in *Dionysus I-III*, York

GRIFFITHS, A. (1996), *Stage Directions: Essays in Ancient Drama in Honour of E. W. Handley, B.I.C.S.* Supp. 66, London

GROTOWSKI, J. (1969), *Towards a Poor Theatre*, E. Barba, ed., pref., P. Brook, London

GUETTEL COLE, S. (1998), 'Domesticating Artemis', in Blundell & Williamson (1998), 27-43

HALL, E. (1989, rep. 1991), *Inventing the Barbarian*, Oxford
---------- (1992), 'When is a Myth not a Myth? Bernal's Ancient Model', *Arethusa*, Vol. 25, 181-201
---------- (1997) 'The sociology of Athenian tragedy', in Easterling (1997), 93-126

HARDWICK, L. (1992), 'Convergence and Divergence in Reading Homer' in Emlyn-Jones, Hardwick & Purkis, 227-248
---------- 1993), 'Philomel and Pericles: Silence in the Funeral Speech', in *Greece & Rome, Vol. xl, No. 2 Oct. 1993*, 147-62
---------- (1996), 'Critical Humanism in Action: Towards Reading Aeschylus's *The Persians'*, in *Media and Technology for Human Resource Development*, Vols 7 & 8, No. 1, January 1996, 23-34
---------- & IRELAND, S., eds (1996), *Selected Proceedings of the Reception of Classical Texts and Images O.U. Conference*, Milton Keynes

HAREWOOD, the Earl of, ed. (1987), *Kobbé's Complete Opera Book* (1922, rev. 1976, 1987), London

HARRISON, T. (1988), 'Facing up to the Muses', in Astley (1991), 429-54

HARTIGAN, K.V. (1995), *Greek Tragedy on the American Stage 1882-1994*, Westport, Conn.

HAZEL, R. (1996), ' "..and a chorus of Corinthian women": Use of the Chorus in recent productions of Euripides' *Medea*', in Hardwick & Ireland, eds (1996), 218-31

HEATHCOTE, D. (1971), 'Drama and Education: Subject or System?', in Dodd & Hickson (1971), London

HEILPERN, J. (1977), *Conference of the Birds: The Story of Peter Brook in Africa*, London

HESKETH, M. & J. UNDERWOOD (1994), 'Keeping One Step Ahead of the Greeks', in *SCYPT Journal*, Number 28, August 1994, 22-36, Lancaster

HEYLEN, R. (1993), *Translation, Poetics and the Stage*, London

H.M.I. (1989), *Drama From 5-16: Curriculum Matters 17*, London
---------- (1990), *The Teaching and Learning of Drama: HMI Inspection Review*, London

HOLMES, J. (1969), 'Forms of verse translation and the translation of verse forms'; repr. in Holmes (1988), 23-33
---------- (1988), *Translated!*, Amsterdam
---------- J. LAMBERT & R. VAN DEN BROECK, eds (1978), *Literature and Translation*

HOLST-WARHAFT, G. (1992), *Dangerous Voices: Women's Laments and Greek Literature*, London

HOLUB, R. C. (1984), *Reception Theory: A Critical Introduction*, N.Y. & London

JENKYNS, R. (1997), 'Unconscious Classical Sources of the *Divine Comedy*', in *International Journal of the Classical Tradition*, Vol. 4, Number 1, Summer 1997, 23-36

JOHNSTONE, D., ed. (1996), *Stages of Translation*, London

JONES, P. V. et al. (1984), *The World of Athens*, for J.A.C.T., Cambridge

JONES, R. (1996), 'Author(s) and Authority: Brian Friel's *Living Quarters*', in Hardwick & Ireland (1996), 252-64

JUST, R. (1989), *Women in Athenian Law and Life*, London

KEARNS, E. (1998), 'The nature of heroines', in Blundell & Williamson (1998), 96-110

KERSHAW, B. (1992), *The Politics of Performance*, London
---------- & T. COULT (1983), *Engineers of the Imagination: The Welfare State Handbook*, London

KEYSSAR, H. (1984), *Feminist Theatre*, N. Y. & Basingstoke

KIBERD, D. (1995, rep. 1996), *Inventing Ireland: the Literature of a Modern Nation*, London

KING, B. (1992), *Post-Colonial English Drama*, Basingstoke

KNOX, B. (1983), 'The *Medea* of Euripides' in Segal (1983), 272-93

KOTT, J. (1965), *Shakespeare Our Contemporary*, trs. B. Taborski, pref. P. Brook, London
---------- (1974), trs. B. Taborski & E. J. Czerwinski, *The Eating of the Gods*, London

KRITZECK, J., ed. (1964), *Anthology of Islamic Literature*, Harmondsworth

LADA-RICHARDS, I. (1997), '"Estrangement" or "Reincarnation"?: Performers and Performance on the Classical Athenian Stage', *Arion 5.2*, Fall 1997, 66-107

LARRINGTON, C., ed. (1992), *The Feminist Companion to Mythology*, London

LEFKOWITZ, M. R. (1983), 'Wives and Husbands', in McAuslan & Walcot (1996), 67-82
---------- & M. B. FANT (1982), *Women's Life in Greece and Rome: A Source Book in Translation*, London
---------- & G. MACLEAN ROGERS, eds (1996), *Black Athena Revisited*, Carolina

LINKLATER, P., ed. (1981), *At the Royal Court*, London

LOGUE, C. (1993), Interviewed by S. Guppy, *The Art of Poetry LXVI, The Paris Review*, No. 127, Summer 1993, 239-64

LORAUX, N. (1984, trs. C. Levine, 1993, corr. 1994), *The Children of Athena*, Princeton, N.J.
---------- (1987), trs. A. Forster, *Tragic Ways of Killing a Woman*, Cambridge, Mass.

MACDOWELL, D. M. (1995), *Aristophanes and Athens: An Introduction to the Plays*, Oxford

MACFARLANE, J. (1953), 'Modes of Translation', *The Durham University Journal,* Vol. XLV, No. 3, 77-93

MACINTOSH, F. (1994), *Dying Acts: Death in Ancient Greek and Modern Irish Tragic Drama*, Cork & N.Y
---------- (1995), 'Under the Blue Pencil: Greek Tragedy and the British Censor', *Dialogos* 2, 54-70
---------- (1997), 'Tragedy in performance: nineteenth- and twentieth-century productions', in Easterling (1997), 284-323

MACKINNON, K. (1986), *Greek Tragedy into Film,* London
---------- (1995), *International Journal of the Classical Tradition*, Vol. 2, Number 1, 107-19

MANDELA, N. (1994), *Long Walk to Freedom*, Little, Brown & Co.

MARCH, J. (1989), 'Euripides' *Bakchai*: A reconsideration in the light of vase paintings', *B.I.C.S.* 36, 33-65
---------- (1990), 'Euripides the Misogynist?' in Powell (1990), 32-75

MAROWITZ, C. (1991), *Recycling Shakespeare*, Basingstoke

McAUSLAN, I. & P. WALCOTT (1993), *Greek Tragedy*, Oxford
---------- (1996), *Women in Antiquity (Greece & Rome Studies)*, Oxford

McDONALD, M. (1992), *Ancient Sun, Modern Light,* Columbia Univ. Press, N.Y.
---------- (1997), 'Medea as Politician and Diva. Riding the Dragon into the Future', in Clauss & Johnston (1997), 297-323

McGREGOR, L. (1976), *Developments in Drama Teaching*, London
---------- M. TATE & K. ROBINSON (1977), *Learning Through Drama: Report of the Schools Council Drama Teaching Project (10-16)*, London

MUIR, J.V. (1985), 'Religion and the new education: the challenge of the sophists', in Easterling & Muir (1985), 191-218

MURRAY, O. (1978, rep. 1993), *Early Greece*, London

ORANJE, H. (1984), *Euripides' Bacchae: The Play and its Audience*, Leiden

PADEL, R. (1992), *In and Out of the Mind,* Princeton
---------- (1995), *Whom the Gods Destroy*, Princeton

PATTERSON, C. B. (1981), *Pericles' Citizenship Law of 451-450 B.C.*, N.Y.

PELLING, C., ed. (1997), *Greek Tragedy and the Historian*, Oxford

PICKARD-CAMBRIDGE, A. W. (1988), *The Dramatic Festivals of Athens,* 2nd. ed. rev. J. Gould & D. M. Lewis, Oxford

POMEROY, S. B. (1973), 'Select Bibliography on Women in Antiquity', *Arethusa*, Vol. 6, no.1, Spring 1973, 125-7
---------- (1975), *Goddesses, Whores, Wives and Slaves,* N.Y., rep. 1994, London

POWELL, A., ed. (1990), *Euripides, Women and Sexuality*, London

REDLINGTON, C. (1983), *Can Drama Teach? An Historical and Evaluative Analysis of T.I.E.*, London

REHM, R. (1992), *Greek Tragic Theatre*, London
---------- (1994), *Marriage to Death*, Princeton

RICHTARIK, M. J. (1994), *Acting Between the Lines: The Field Day Theatre Company and Irish Cultural Politics 1980-1984*, Oxford

RIGG, D. (1982), *No Turn Unstoned*, London

ROBERTS, P., ed. (1985), *Bond on File*, London

ROSENMEYER, T. G. (1981), 'Drama' in Finley (1981), 120-54

RUDKIN, D. (1996), 'First thoughts towards a translation of Euripides' 'Problem Play': *The Herakles*', in Johnstone (1996), 81-93

RUSSELL, A. (1996), 'Tragedy, Gender, Performance: Women as Tragic Heroes on the Nineteenth-Century Stage', *Comparative Drama*, Vol. 30, Number 2, Summer 1996, 135-57

RUTTER, C. with F. EVANS (1988), *Clamorous Voices: Shakespeare's Women Today*, London

SAID, E. W. (1978), *Orientalism*, London

SALE, W. (1972), 'The psychoanalysis of Pentheus in the *Bacchae* of Euripides', *Y.C.S.* 22, 63-82

SALGADO, G. (1975), *Eyewitnesses of Shakespeare*, London & Toronto

SANDFORD, M. R. (1995), *Happenings and Other Acts*, reprint of the 'Happenings' issue of *The Drama Review* (1965), London

SEAFORD, R. (1994), *Reciprocity and Ritual*, Oxford

SEGAL, E., ed. (1983, rep. 1988), *Oxford Readings in Greek Tragedy*, Oxford

SHOWALTER, E. (1985), 'The Feminist Critical Revolution', in Bonner et al. (1992), 73-8

SKINNER, M. (1986), 'Rescuing Creusa: New methodological approaches to women in antiquity', *Helios 13.2*, 1-8

SIMON, E. (1982), *The Ancient Theatre*, trs. C.E. Vafopoulou-Richardson, London & N.Y.

SLADE, P. (1954), *Child Drama*, Cambridge
---------- (1964), *An Introduction to Child Drama*, Cambridge

SOMMERSTEIN, A. H. (1997), 'The Theatre Audience, the *Demos*, and the *Suppliants* of Aeschylus', in Pelling (1997), 63-79

STEARS, K. (1998), 'Death becomes her: gender and Athenian death ritual', in Blundell & Williamson (1998), 113-127

STEINBERG, M. (1985), *Flashback: A Pictorial History 1879-1979*, Stratford-upon-Avon

STEINER, D. (1995), 'Eyeless in Argos: a reading of *Agamemnon* 416-19', *JHS, CXV* 1995, 175-82

STEINER, G. (1975, rep.1992 & 1998), *After Babel: Aspects of Language and Translation*, Oxford
---------- (1984), *Antigones*, Oxford.

SULERI, S. (1987), 'The Geography of *A Passage to India*', in Walder (1990), 245-50

SUZUKI, M. (1989), *Metamorphoses of Helen*, Ithaca & London

TAYLOR, D. (1978, rep. 1985, 1986, 1988), *Acting and The Stage (Greek & Roman Topics 6)*, London

TAPLIN, O. (1977), *The Stagecraft of Aeschylus*, Oxford
---------- (1978, rep. 1993), *Greek Tragedy in Action*, London
---------- (1993), *Comic Angels and other approaches to Greek Drama through Vase-Paintings*, Oxford
---------- (1998), 'Forum', *Arion*, Vol. 5.3, Winter 1998, 155-8

TEEVAN, C. (1996), 'A barbarian activity: the process of translation of Euripides' *Iphigenia in Aulis*', in Johnstone (1996), 95-107

THOMAS, C. G. (1973), 'Matriarchy in Early Greece', *Arethusa*, Vol. 6, no. 2, Fall 1973, 173-96

THORNTON, B. S. (1997), *Eros: The Myth of Ancient Greek Sexuality*, Westview

TRENDALL, A. D. (1989), *Red Figure Vases of South Italy and Sicily*, London

TRYPANIS, C. (1981), 'Modern Productions of Ancient Dramas', *British Academy Lecture 1979* Oxford

VERSNEL, H. S. (1992), 'The Festival for the Bona Dea and the Thesmophoria', in McAuslan & Walcot (1996), 182-204

WALCOT, P. (1984), 'Greek Attitudes Towards Women: The Mythological Evidence', in McAuslan & Walcot (1996), 91-102

WALDER, D., ed. (1990), *Literature in the Modern World*, Oxford

WALKER, J., ed. (1997), *Halliwell's Film & Video Guide*, 12th ed., London

WALTON, J. M. (1980, rev. 1991), *Greek Theatre Practice*, London

WANDOR, M. (1981), *Understudies: Theatre and Sexual Politics*, London
---------- (1982), *Plays by Women: Volume One*, London
---------- (1983), *Plays by Women: Volume Two*, London
---------- (1987), *Look Back In Gender*, London

WAY, B. (1967), *Development Through Drama*, London

WILES, D. (1997), *Tragedy in Athens: Performance Space and Theatrical Meaning*, Cambridge

WILLIAMSON, M. (1990), 'A Woman's Place in Euripides' *Medea*', in Powell (1990), 16-31

WILSON, P.(1997), 'Leading the Tragic Khoros: Tragic Prestige in the Democratic City', in Pelling (1997), 81-108

WINKLER, J. J. (1990), 'The Ephebes' Song: *tragoidia* and *polis*', in Winkler & Zeitlin (1990), 20-62

WINKLER, J .J. & F. ZEITLIN, eds (1990), *Nothing To Do With Dionysos?*, Princeton

WINNINGTON-INGRAM, R. P. (1948), 'Clytemnestra and the Vote of Athena', in Segal (1983), 84-103

WOOSTER, R. (1986), 'From Oppression to Suppression', *SCYPT Journal: New Voices in young peoples theatre, number sixteen*, London

YEOMAN, I. (1995), 'The Actor in Role', *SCYPT Journal*, Number 30, June 1995, 28-36, Lancaster

ZEITLIN, F. (1990), 'Playing the Other: Theater, Theatricality and the Feminine in Greek Drama', in Winkler & Zeitlin (1990), 63-94
---------- (1996), *Playing the Other*, Chicago

ZIMMERMAN, B., ed. (1992), *Drama I: Antike Dramentheoren und ihre Rezeption*, Stuttgart

5 OTHER SOURCES

Archives

London Theatre Record: a compilation of reviews of shows in London since 1980. The Theatre Museum Archive, Covent Garden, London

RSC Prompt copies in The Shakespeare Centre Archive, Stratford-upon-Avon

RSC in-house videos in The Shakespeare Centre Archive, Stratford-upon-Avon

Audio-visual & electronic material

Video by Ian Spink for Joint Stock's production of Caryl Churchill's *A Mouthful of Birds*; from Harriet Cruickshank, the Cazenove Agency, London

BBCTV 'Omnibus' programme: November 1988: *Caryl Churchill*

Open University *A209: Fifth-Century Athens: Democracy & City State*; video cassette 02: 'The Present in the Past: Authenticity in Greek Theatre', pres. J. Purkis

The Open University Reception of Greek Texts and Images Database

Privately held papers

'Paper' interview: Katie Mitchell, director of RSC production of *The Phoenician Women*

Notes of personal interviews with David Stuttard, The Actors of Dionysus

Typescript of *Getting To It*, provided by Geoff Gillham.

Plays & Players

Plays International

RSC Magazines

SCYPT (The Standing Conference of Young People's Theatres) *Journals*

Programmes and publicity materials (when cited in text)

***